

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Charter School Name	Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School
Applicant Name(s)	Christina Pahucki
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Media Contact Email Address	ali@withlovealib.com
Media Contact Telephone Number	(646)773-4081
District of Location	Warwick Valley School District
Opening Date	September 2014
Proposed Charter Term	5 Years
Proposed Management Company or Partners	None
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span During Charter Term	2013 - 2014 : K - 6, 252 students 2014 - 2015 : K - 7, 296 students 2015 - 2016 : K - 8, 340 students 2016 - 2017 : K - 8, 340 students 2017 - 2018 : K - 8, 340 students
Projected Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	K - 8, 340
Mission Statement	The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

SCHOOL SUMMARY

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School will embrace the rich history of agriculture in Orange County and become the first rural charter school in New York. DIRT Charter School will offer a unique and innovative educational alternative to traditional public education. DIRT will strive for excellence in all academic subject areas and the fine arts, while at the same time focusing on sustainable living principles, including environmental stewardship and respect for all living things.

The mission of DIRT Charter School is to provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

The general objectives of DIRT Charter School are:

- To ensure all students reach their full academic and developmental potential
- To prepare students to become engaged lifelong learners
- To create respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who are good stewards of the environment.

DIRT's rigorous academic program will be based on Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC), a curricular framework developed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). EIC is a research-based model for interdisciplinary, hands-on, and engaging learning for all learners. Research has proven the EIC model increases student performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science; reduces discipline and classroom management problems; develops problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills, increases engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and demonstrates a greater pride and ownership in student schoolwork.

DIRT's curriculum will prepare all students to meet and successfully master the common core curriculum based on the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. The school's educators will use local natural surroundings and community resources as a context for standards-based instruction. Curriculum will be integrated and interdisciplinary, utilizing collaborative instruction.

DIRT's project-based academic program will set it apart from traditional public schooling. Students at DIRT will be engaged in real-world investigations that will frequently take them out of the classroom, into nature and the larger community. This approach will foster critical thinking, create an atmosphere of collaboration, and engage and empower students and teachers alike. Because projects will grow out of student-driven questioning, students will have an investment and sense of ownership regarding their learning.

Students at DIRT will have the unique opportunity to participate in the agricultural process by visiting Rogowski Farm, a local certified naturally grown vegetable farm whose owner is a recipient of the "Genius MacArthur Fellows Award" for her farming innovations. DIRT faculty will design curriculum and utilize *NY Agriculture in the Classroom* resources for students that will include hands-on opportunities at the farm. Students will experience first hand how seeds are

planted, cared for, harvested and sold. Based on these real world experiences, DIRT teachers will collaborate with students to plan school gardens, create animal habitats and develop sustainable water systems.

DIRT's food service program will be sourced through *Red Rabbit*, an established company based in New York City, which already purchases produce in Orange County to use in the meals they provide to New York City charter schools. Red Rabbit has agreed to support DIRT's plan to source locally grown foods and will expand contracting initiatives with Orange County farmers to accomplish our goals.

Spanish as a second language is scheduled every other day. Rural Orange County has a large population of Spanish speaking immigrants who move to the area for economic opportunities in agriculture. In keeping with our mission of living locally and thinking globally, and in an effort to reach one of our target student populations, DIRT will offer English Language Learner services as well as teach Spanish as a second language. One of DIRT's goals is to help close the cultural gap that can often develop due to language barriers.

DIRT is designed to accelerate the achievement of special needs and ELL students. DIRT's hands on, project based approach to teaching, the use of the environment as a classroom, and small class sizes, all contribute to DIRT's ability to meet the needs of each child. The range of interventions available at DIRT includes supplemental curricula, small group instruction, and push-in and pull-out services by certified special education staff and contractors.

The environmental focus of DIRT offers students extensive opportunities for community service. DIRT will take a leadership role in sustainability, with community involvement opportunities including the building of a garden, composting, and recycling programs. Students will benefit from working with artists from Wallkill River School and the Orange County Art Council. DIRT will continue to reach out to additional community groups and cultivate opportunities to establish symbiotic relationships where our students can lend service, while learning valuable professional and life skills.

To accomplish DIRT's mission, the school's leadership design will include a Principal, a Head Teacher and a Director of Business and Operations. The Principal, along with the entire team of teachers, will be responsible for developing and refining the curriculum. This collaboration will be viable due to the school's small size that includes only two classes per grade and a full capacity of 340 students. The Head Teacher will assist the Principal with student discipline. The Director of Business and Operations will be responsible for the non-instructional functions of the school, which will allow the Principal to focus on supporting instruction.

CERTIFICATION AND ASSURANCES STATEMENT

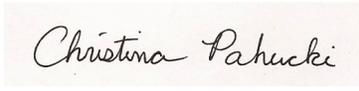
Proposed Charter School Name: Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School
Proposed School Location (District): Orange County

I hereby certify that the founding group/prospective Board of Trustees have all read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. By submitting a charter school application to the Board of Regents, the founding group/prospective Board of Trustees understands that the Board of Regents is the authorized chartering entity with the authority to approve our application to establish the proposed charter school and enter into a charter agreement setting forth the terms and conditions under which the Board of Trustees will operate the charter school. The applicant founding group/prospective Board of Trustees also understands that this charter school application serves as the first component of an application for a federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) Planning and Implementation Grant. We understand that if the charter application is approved and a charter is issued by the Board of Regents, the school is qualified to receive a CSP grant, pending available funding and final approval of additional materials – including budget materials - by NYSED and by the New York State Office of the Comptroller. We agree to complete all required budget information and assurances according to forthcoming instructions and a revised timeframe to be issued by NYSED.

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further I understand that, if awarded a charter, the proposed school shall be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, race, creed, national origin or ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, age, religion, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement. I understand that the Charter Schools Act allows, to the extent consistent with Federal law, “the establishment of a single-sex charter school or a charter school designed to provide expanded learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure or students with disabilities and English language learners.”⁷

The applicant(s) also make(s) the following assurances pursuant to Section 5203(b)(3) of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which will be incorporated into, and made a part of, the Charter School’s charter, if granted, and be binding on the Charter School itself:

- An assurance that the charter school will annually provide the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives described in this application ⁸
- An assurance that the charter school will cooperate with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department in evaluating the program assisted under this subpart;⁹ and,
- That the charter school will provide such other information and assurances as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and the State Education Department may require.¹⁰

Signature of Applicants:	
Date:	March 10, 2013
Print/Type Name:	Christina Pahucki

⁷ N.Y. Education Law § 2854(2)(a)

⁸ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(J)

⁹ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(K)

¹⁰ ESEA § 5203(b)(3)(N)

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* Not to be included in page limit totals

I. MISSION, KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS, ENROLLMENT, AND COMMUNITY

A. Mission Statement and Objectives

Mission Statement: The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential, and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

DIRT Objectives (from Education Law §2850(2)):

- Improve student learning and achievement
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel
- Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system
- Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results
- Create respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who are good stewards of our environment (original to DIRT)

DIRT Objectives	Alignment with DIRT Mission Statement
Improve student learning and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full academic and developmental potential ● Lifelong learners ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● High academic achievement
Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full academic and developmental potential ● Lifelong learners ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● High academic achievement
Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interdisciplinary learning ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● High academic achievement
Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full academic and developmental potential ● Lifelong learners ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● High academic achievement
Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interdisciplinary learning ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● Understanding of the interdependence of local and global existence
Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full academic and developmental potential ● Interdisciplinary learning ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● High academic achievement

Create respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who are good stewards of our environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full academic and developmental potential ● Lifelong learners ● Creative and critical thinking skills ● Understanding of interdependence of our local and global existence
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To meet these objectives DIRT Charter School will:

- Ensure all students can read, write, and compute at or above grade level according to the expectations of the Common Core Standards
- Ensure all students can use their knowledge, skills, technology, and creativity to problem solve
- Ensure all students have confidence in their knowledge, creativity, and ability to use technology to effectively problem solve
- Ensure all students exhibit positive behavior and make healthy choices
- Use interdisciplinary and hands on teaching methods to increase deeper student understanding and application of concepts
- Provide additional individualized academic support for students with additional needs such as special education or ELL students
- Develop a unique school befitting a rural community that currently has no charter or magnet school choices
- Provide professional development for it’s teachers and staff on how to integrate environmental science into all subject areas
- Create jobs for teachers and staff in an area hit hard by recent education cuts
- Assess student learning using a variety of frequent formative performance based methods and standardized summative assessments to monitor the learning plan for each student

B. Key Design Elements

DIRT Charter School will provide its students with an integrated learning experience that emphasizes sustainable living practices; an experiential approach to education that encourages hands-on learning in the community as well as in the classroom; a culturally rich atmosphere that celebrates the expansive world around us; an environment of academic excellence that taps into the creativity and uniqueness of each child and that fosters mutual respect. Focused on the theme of environmental sustainability, the foundation of DIRT’s rigorous academic program will be research-based using the “Environment as an Integrating Context for learning” (EIC) curriculum framework which research has proven to increase student performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science; reduced discipline and classroom management problems; development of problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills, increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and, demonstration of greater pride and ownership in student schoolwork. DIRT Charter School does not have a student enrollment preference. The DIRT Charter School program will include the following design elements:

Design Element 1: Focus on Environmental Science

Mission Alignment: Understanding of the interdependence of local and global existence; Full academic and developmental potential; High academic achievement

Education Law Alignment: Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods; Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; improve student learning and achievement

A key design element at DIRT Charter School is to provide each child with a solid foundation in

environmental science as the unifying strand through all scientific disciplines and their applications. Teachers at DIRT will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for providing standards-based and inquiry-driven instruction. Students will be able to perform experiments, farm, garden, and hike in settings both inside and outside of the school.

Design Element 2: Interdependence Local, Natural and Community Surroundings

Mission Alignment: Understanding of the interdependence of local and global existence; Interdisciplinary learning

Education Law Alignment: Increase learning opportunities for all students; Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods

The outdoor settings at DIRT where students study and do their work will be called ‘Learning Laboratories.’ Teachers will develop project-based, hands-on lessons that are learner-centered and based on the New York State student academic achievement standards. Learning Laboratory experiences will be a part of each student’s school day. Each student will have a developmentally appropriate written laboratory investigation to complete on a daily basis building into a quarterly project. We believe that our Learning Laboratories will increase learning opportunities for all students, encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, with a special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure. Students who study and work in learning laboratories will be able to meet the New York State student academic achievement standards.

Design Element 3: Unifying Integrated and Interdisciplinary Instruction

Mission Alignment: Interdisciplinary learning, Creative and critical thinking skills; Full academic and developmental potential; High academic achievement

Education Law Alignment: Improve student learning and achievement; Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities; Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods

A unique educational design feature at DIRT Charter School will be its innovative curriculum, which will be designed using the key concepts and performance indicators from the New York State Common Core Learning Standards (NYSCCLS). All core subjects will be integrated and teachers will work collaboratively, and be trained in the instructional strategy of curriculum integration, in which students acquire, apply, and integrate core knowledge and skills in all subject areas. Research has demonstrated that an integrated curriculum improves student motivation and student effort, and leads to a deeper conceptual knowledge rather than traditional separate subject instruction.¹ We believe the use of an integrated curriculum will improve student learning and achievement. The DIRT curriculum will be developed based on Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC), a curricular framework developed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). EIC is a research-based model for an interdisciplinary, hands-on, and engaging learning for all learning. Using the EIC model, all teaching and learning at DIRT will be centered on common environmental projects. Lessons across disciplines will be intertwined, and classes at a grade level will be coordinated with one another as they do their part in bringing a project together. Interdisciplinary learning fosters student’s ability to see connections between subject matter that is traditionally compartmentalized, while also allowing for an approach to problem solving that draws on knowledge from across subject matter, a practice essential in the real world. This

¹ S.M. Drake, R.C. Burns, Meeting Standards Through Integrated Curriculum (ASCD Publications, 2004).

approach to education will allow teachers to transform traditional pedagogy and embrace a collaborative teaching style.

Design Element 4: Integrated Remediation and/or Enrichment

Mission Alignment: Full academic and developmental potential; Lifelong learners; Creative and critical thinking skills; High academic achievement; Interdisciplinary learning

Education Law Alignment: Improve student learning and achievement; Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure

A key feature of the school day will be integrated remediation and/or enrichment. Students who are struggling academically will receive additional instruction or academic assistance. The DIRT program will benefit students at risk of academic failure in a number of important ways. When a student is identified as being at risk of not completing their education based on factors such as poor school performance, poor attendance, behavioral difficulties, or economic or environmental disadvantage, he or she will be referred to Response to Intervention (RTI) team. The RTI team will work to immediately identify and make instructional and behavioral decisions to best support students. For students below grade level in Reading or Math, the DIRT Administrator will facilitate the scheduling of targeted interventions. DIRT will make referrals to outside resources on an as-needed basis.

Design Element 5: After school Enrichment Programs/Clubs/Organizations

Mission Alignment: Full academic and developmental potential; Lifelong learners; Creative and critical thinking skills; Interdisciplinary learning

Education Law Alignment: Increase learning opportunities for all students; Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel

DIRT will offer a one hour enrichment period after every school day, where students may choose from additional activities in the arts or sports. This will be an optional portion of the day in which we hope many of our students will participate. DIRT will partner with local organizations, such as: artist's cooperatives, music schools, dance studios, as well as talented community members and parents to develop and offer enrichment programs. DIRT also plans to incorporate well known programs such as Science Olympiad into our enrichment program offerings. Teachers and administrators will encourage students to create student run clubs and organizations.

Design Element 6: Data-driven Decision Making to inform instruction and communicate progress

Mission Alignment: High academic achievement

Education Law Alignment: Improve student learning and achievement; Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results

One pedagogical approach that teachers will utilize at DIRT is Data-driven decision making. Teachers will

collect and analyze multiple forms of data, including: student assessment data, student demographic data, program data, and other sources of data such as student products and classroom observation. We believe the use of data-driven decision making will provide teachers and schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability. Teachers will use collected data as an ongoing formative assessment tool to evaluate student learning and to diagnose teaching/learning difficulties. All faculty members will be trained in analyzing and using data to diagnose student learning, to make decisions about instruction, to guide student’s work, and to set instructional goals. Program data will be used as only one of several varied ways to communicate with parents by sharing the progress of their child. Curriculum-based assessments along with performance tasks will test student’s abilities to apply knowledge and skills in authentic situations. We believe the use of Data-driven decision making will create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel.

C. Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention

DIRT is planning to start a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school in our first year of operation. We will expand to a K - 7 charter school in our second year of operation, and K- 8 in our third year, which will bring our school’s target enrollment to 340 students. DIRT’s small school setting will enable increased learning opportunities for all of its students. The school’s small setting will allow DIRT to set individual goals for each student based on an intimate knowledge of students’ academic backgrounds and abilities. With fewer students and a small small-to-teacher ratio (15/1 in grades K - 3 and 22/1 in grades 4 - 8), DIRT will be able to give students the attention they need to build the relationships that are required to help at-risk students succeed. The feedback and support received from our community based on survey and one-on-one interactions indicates that the enrollment target is very attainable and provides an attractive school option particularly for Orange County families whose only other choices are traditional public schools.

In order to reach our target enrollment of 340 students, we feel it is important to offer seven grade levels in our first year of operation. Our rationale for selecting this particular enrollment size is that students will benefit from having a consistent learning environment over many years. We will offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that will be developed according to the spiral learning approach. As students move upwards through the levels in school their learning will grow and expand based on the concepts they have previously encountered in an earlier grade. We plan on having all of our kindergarten through sixth grade teachers in place our first year. This will allow them to develop a comprehensive curriculum as a team. DIRT will have two classes in each grade level. The chart below reflects the maximum amount of students we plan to enroll.

Projected Enrollment Table over the Charter Term

Grades	Διαρκ	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
K	5-6	30	30	30	30	30
1st	6-7	30	30	30	30	30
2nd	7-8	30	30	30	30	30
3rd	8-9	30	30	30	30	30
4th	9-10	44	44	44	44	44
5th	10-11	44	44	44	44	44
6th	11-12	44	44	44	44	44
7th	12-13		44	44	44	44
8th	13-14			44	44	44

Total		252	296	340	340	340
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Community Support and Interest: The applicant group is made up of specially skilled community members and parents concerned about the current public schooling options in the applicant district. Their input into the design elements and educational and financial plan for the school is representative of the larger community, which has been supported by various surveys and stakeholder meetings within the larger community. Furthermore, our applicant group has assessed family and community support within the proposed sending district/region by completing surveys, hosting informational meetings, speaking to the press, and by meeting with community stakeholders. Over 370 supporters have signed our petition via our website or in person. 291 children have been signed up via a survey as prospective students. Our Facebook page is visited often. Our website has had over 3,300 visits. We have received numerous inquiries about job openings at the school. Parents well outside the proposed 15 mile transportation radius have expressed an interest in enrolling their children and transporting them to the school. One parent told us at an informational meeting that she is eagerly awaiting our decision on a location so that she can move to a home within 15 miles of the school. DIRT, being the first charter school in this area, has generated excitement and support from parents and the community. As plans for DIRT progress, support grows. Based on this interest, we believe we will meet or exceed our enrollment targets.

Recruitment and Retention: DIRT Charter School plans to recruit and retain students with disabilities, ELL students, students who receive free lunch and students whose families may be less informed about available options. DIRT will comply with all aspects of the Charter School Law, especially the amendments of 2010 regarding attracting and educating students with disabilities, and the recent July 16, 2012 methodology adopted by the Board of Regents.

DIRT plans on recruiting special education students by promoting our small class size, which will allow for individualized student attention. Our unique hands-on curriculum will allow students with disabilities a multi-modal learning experience where they will receive instruction through visual, audio, and tactile modes. We believe that DIRT’s Learning Laboratories (which will be located in outdoor settings) will appeal to special needs students because students will be actively engaged in their learning rather than passively receiving instruction at a desk. We will work with parents to ensure that children of all needs are welcome and that students with disabilities will receive the individual care that is needed to help them succeed. DIRT has partnered with Footings Inc., a non-for-profit agency that provides support for special education students both in and outside of school. Our school facility will be handicapped accessible. We will retain students with disabilities by providing an individualized learning approach that is tailored to meet each students learning needs. In our district of possible location preliminary enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for special education students are 13% for Warwick.

The most common second language in Orange County is Spanish. We are recruiting English Language Learners by distributing our DIRT fliers in both English and Spanish. All marketing materials and applications will be written in English and Spanish. We will provide all of our students with foreign language instruction in Spanish. We intend on hiring several teachers and staff who are bilingual to ensure clear communication with ELL parents. We will retain ELL students by using a structured immersion model tailored to meet the needs of each learner. Additionally, ELL students will receive literacy support in their native language whether that is Spanish or another language.

In our district of possible location, Warwick, 1% of students are considered limited in English proficiency. The enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for English Language Learners are 0.7% for Warwick. At that percentage, we can expect about 3 to 4 ELL students. The data shows that it is highly likely that all of our ELL students would be Spanish speaking students with only rare exceptions. In the event of an ELL student whose second language is other than Spanish, we would create an individualized program for that student as we plan to do for all our ELL students.

Most of our ELL students in this area are Spanish speaking children of farm workers. The farm workers with children in our area schools overwhelmingly choose to stay here year round. The small percentage of children in this area who do move seasonally is so small it would not destabilize our enrollment or retention rates.

DIRT Charter School will recruit students who are eligible for free or reduced meals, and students whose families may be less informed about available school options by using our website, Facebook page, informational meetings, and newspaper articles to communicate what support is available regarding free or reduced meals, school supplies, school uniforms, and after school activity fees, etc. We will retain these students by providing parents with necessary information on reduced lunch prices and assistance with school materials and uniforms in a timely manner so that students individual needs will be met every school year. In our district of possible location preliminary enrollment targets as set by the Charter Schools Institute for students eligible for free or reduced lunch are 8.7% for Warwick.

Application, Admissions and Enrollment: Applications for DIRT students will be made available through mail, e-mail, fax, or through our website. In addition, we will distribute applications through local preschools and day care organizations, including those servicing farm worker children in our community. The admission and enrollment process at DIRT Charter School will give preference to siblings, and then to students who reside in the school's home district.

Plan for a Public Lottery: A lottery system will be used if student demand exceeds capacity. Students who are not chosen will be placed on a waiting list and will be notified in writing of any vacancy in their grade level. More details of our application, admissions, and enrollment process are described in Attachment 1.

D. Community to be Served

Value of the School in the Community: DIRT Charter School's location will be in Orange County, New York. Orange County is located approximately one hour north of New York City. It is a largely rural county that is abundant with farmland and small towns. The [2010 census data](#) showed there were 372,813 people living in Orange County. There was a 9.2% increase in population from the year 2000 and this made Orange County the second fastest growing county in New York². With 27 schools in Orange County being listed by the NYSED as, "[Being in Improvement Status](#),"³ for 2011 - 2012 the need for quality education options is apparent. DIRT Charter School will be the first elementary charter school in our area. The value of DIRT charter school in the community will be the educational alternative it will provide for local children. Our community outreach efforts, which include hosting public meetings and providing newspaper articles for local papers, have generated support and interest from area parents.

Despite the increase in the Orange County population, some school districts in our area are experiencing a decline in enrollment in the past 5 to 7 years. In a 2013 demographic study done by the [Western Suffolk BOCES](#)⁴ the decline in enrollment is attributed to a decrease in births and the housing market standstill. Despite this, the number of students enrolled in parochial and private schools has increased. The Warwick Valley Central School District had 239 students (5%) attending non-public schools in 2005. That number climbed to 274 (6.6%) by 2012. This data is evidence that parents are

² http://www.orangecountygov.com/filestorage/124/1362/3210/Population_Change_2000-2010.pdf

Demographics and Census of Orange County, NY

³ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/accountability/2011-12/November2011SchoolsInImprovementStatus.pdf>

NYSED, Information and Reporting Services

⁴ http://www.warwickvalleyschools.com/District/budget/1314/pdfs/Enrollmen_Facilities.pdf

Slide #10, February 4, 2013, Demographic, Enrollment and Facilities Overview, Western Suffolk BOCES, Office of School Planning and Research

increasingly enrolling their children in non-public educational institutions. The DIRT Charter School, being a public school, free of tuition, is a much needed addition in our area.

Expected Student Population: The student population that DIRT would serve would be similar to student populations in the southern Orange County area. Student demographics vary from district to district in Orange County. [The Warwick Valley Central School District Report Card for 2010 - 2011](#)⁵ shows that 84% of 4,166 students are white. 7% of students are eligible for free lunch, and 4% for reduced price lunch. Just 1% of Warwick students are considered limited in English proficiency.

Neighboring school district, [Minisink Valley](#)⁶, shows that 80% of 4,425 students are white. In Minisink 12% of students are eligible for free lunch and 7% are eligible for reduced priced lunches. Just 1% of students are considered limited in English proficiency. The demographics of DIRT Charter School would reflect the similar student population of school districts in the area. There is a need for free and reduced meals services and ELL services. DIRT will offer a free and reduced meal services program and ELL services for students whose native language is not English.

Selection of Community: The DIRT applicant group selected Orange County as a community that we would like to serve because we are Orange County residents who would like to increase options for public education in our area. Many of the applicants for our school have young children whom they wish to enroll. As a result, our team is extremely motivated to make DIRT Charter School a success. Our prospective board of trustees and applicants possess a variety of skills and experience that are needed to create and maintain a charter school. These skills include: teaching, school administration, non-profit board experience, entrepreneurship, curriculum development, fundraising, and marketing. We believe that our combined experiences and abilities, our passion for education and our love for Orange County would allow us to successfully serve our community.

Enhancing and Expanding Educational Options: DIRT Charter School will enhance and expand educational options for Orange County students. According to the [NYSED School Accountability Status for the 2011-12 School Year](#) there are 27 schools in Orange County that are listed as, "Being in Improvement Status." Over the past few years, our area schools have increased classroom sizes, cut educational programs and eliminated many extra curricular activities. Several area schools have considered reducing kindergarten classes to a half day or eliminating kindergarten altogether. DIRT Charter School will provide a full day kindergarten program and offer a variety of after school enrichment programs. We will offer a longer school day that starts at 8:00 am and finishes at 3:55 pm.

Art and Music classes are being reduced or eliminated in many schools in Orange County. The arts will be fully integrated into DIRT's curriculum. Art and Music will be offered daily to students as well as a choice in our after school enrichment programs.

Currently, Orange County's elementary schools operate as traditional public schools with little environmental science taught or incorporated in their curriculum. Students rarely go outdoors to study the world around them. DIRT Charter School students will go outdoors on a regular basis in order to learn about their environment, within their environment. Environmental science will permeate all aspects of our curriculum. Students at DIRT will do more hands-on, authentic learning than is currently found in any Orange County public elementary school.

We believe our small class size, longer school day, innovative hands-on curriculum, and our commitment to teach and provide expressions in: Art, Music, Theater, and Dance, will combine to enhance and expand educational options for Orange County students.

⁵ <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2010-11/AOR-2011-442101060000.pdf>

⁶ <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2010-11/AOR-2011-441101040000.pdf>

Assessing Family and Community Support: Our applicant group has assessed family and community support within the proposed sending region for the proposed school by conducting surveys throughout the Orange County area. Our survey shows 177 parents and guardians who have already indicated an interest in enrolling 291 students in DIRT charter school in 2014. More information on how we assessed family and community support via our outreach efforts can be found in the next section.

E. Public Outreach

DIRT Charter School applicants have completed the following public outreach efforts in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the Board of Regents:

- On February 28, 2012 a press release was sent to local media outlets announcing our first informational meeting. Three positive and informative articles about our proposed Charter School and charter schools in general were published. They were published in the *Times Herald Record*, *The Warwick Advertiser*, and *The Warwick Valley Dispatch*. Please see Attachment 2 for articles.
- Five public information meetings were held where we presented general charter school information, discussed potential school locations, reviewed our target student population and grades to be served and described our educational program(s). Parents and community members were able to ask questions about the school as well as make suggestions. Informational meetings were held on the following dates:
 1. Warwick on March 18, 2012
 2. Westtown (in Minisink School District) on May 2, 2012
 3. Monroe on June 4, 2012
 4. Greenwood Lake on September 12, 2012
 5. Florida, NY on February 13, 2013
- A meeting for community stakeholders was held on March 12, 2013 to gain input on DIRT's proposed program.
- DIRT applicant group team members have solicited letters of support from local organizations with missions similar to our own. These are included in Attachment 2.
- Members of our applicant group have met with the Warwick Valley Superintendent of Schools and the Goshen Superintendent of Schools. The DIRT applicant team has also sent informational letters to the Superintendents of Florida and Minisink Valley School Districts inviting them to meet with us. Copies of the letters are included in Attachment 2.
- Members of our applicant group briefly met with the Tuxedo Superintendent of Schools. The Tuxedo School District is considering the possibility of converting its high school to a 9-12 STEM Academy Charter School.
- Our website at www.dirtcharter.com provides the public with information about DIRT Charter School and charter schools in general. Stakeholders in the community have the opportunity to submit comment on DIRT via the site. The website, to date, has been visited over 3,300 times by over 2,100 unique visitors. The contact link on the website goes to our e-mail address dirtcharterschool@gmail.com. The website is greatly utilized by parents, community members and prospective staff to communicate support, ask questions and make suggestions. A sampling of the

comments from the website are included in Attachment 2.

- DIRT Charter School’s Facebook Page is <https://www.facebook.com/dirtcharter>. This page provides a way for the community to give feedback, and ask questions and make suggestions.
- DIRT has a Pinterest page at <https://pinterest.com/dirtcharter/>. The DIRT Pinterest page has links to DIRT supporters, charter school information, articles on education, educational and environmental activities DIRT teachers may try, and quotes on education philosophy. Parents and community members can “Follow” us to see new additions to the site.
- We circulated a survey via e-mail and through our website. 372 people have entered their names as supporters of the proposed DIRT Charter School. 177 of those supporters are parents or guardians interested in sending their children to DIRT Charter School. We have a growing list of 291 students who are interested in attending our proposed school. The survey provides a space for public comment or questions.
- Members of our applicant team have distributed double-sided English/Spanish fliers that have been given out at presentations, and distributed by hand to prospective applicants. A copy of our flier is included in Attachment 2.
- Members of our applicant team have created DIRT Charter School t-shirts. DIRT applicant team members wear these t-shirts to community events a “conversation starters,” and create family interest in our proposed school.
- In December 2012, we sent an online survey to all DIRT’s prospective parents/guardians in our database to ask for their input on whether DIRT should offer grades K-6 or grades K-8. About 40% responded. About 94% of the responses wanted DIRT to offer grades K-8. The parents also had a space to offer comments on grade level configurations, which many of them utilized. As a result the DIRT Charter School Team decided to expand grade levels from the K-6 in our original proposal to K-8 in this application. An image of the survey and a sampling of the comments are included in Attachment 2.

As we progress through the charter school application process and continue our community outreach, public awareness about our proposed charter school continues to grow. We will continue to use the above mentioned public outreach as a way to inform students in our community about our proposed charter school and give all students an equal opportunity to attend DIRT Charter School. We have taken community feedback from our informational meetings, stakeholder meetings, survey, webpage, and Facebook page seriously and will continue to use it to refine our plans for DIRT.

F. Programmatic and Fiscal Impact

Programmatic Impact: We feel DIRT Charter School will not have a programmatic impact on other elementary schools in Orange County. Our school will open with 252 students and our anticipated full enrollment is 340 students. Parents and guardians from 13 different public school districts in Orange County have shown an interest in enrolling their children in DIRT. This geographically diverse interest is a result of our public outreach efforts. One of our goals is to recruit students from the 13 different school districts so that we would not negatively impact one school district in general.

Orange County has less than ten private elementary schools and most of the schools serve

children who are members of a particular religious community. DIRT Charter School would likely not have a programmatic impact on the area's private school population due to the differences in our curriculum.

DIRT has the potential to positively impact local schools by modeling innovative instructional programs and sharing effective teaching practices. We will make a concerted effort to collaborate with other educators in the Orange County area and share our ideas and experiences on: professional development, parent involvement, extra-curricular activities, and community building.

Fiscal Impact: Our projected assessment of the fiscal impact of our proposed charter school on other public and nonpublic schools in the area will be minimal. According to our public outreach survey prospective DIRT students are coming from twelve different school districts in Orange County. Our prospective enrollment list currently has 54% of DIRT students coming from the Warwick Valley School District, 11% from Minisink, and 11% from Goshen, and the rest coming from 11 other districts. If DIRT Charter School was filled to 90% capacity in our first year and 54% percent of those students were from Warwick, the estimated tuition would be \$1,500,354 which is about 1.8% of the projected Warwick budget for 2013 - 2014 of \$84,235,694. Under the same assumptions, the estimated tuition for Minisink students our first year would be \$263,800, which is about 0.3% of the entire current Minisink budget. For Goshen students, estimated tuition our first year would be \$319,325, which is about 0.5% of the entire current Goshen budget. More information on the expected tuition over the first 5 years, from the other 10 districts can be found in Section III, Part K. Budget and Cash Flow starting on page 52. As our charter school team continues our community outreach plan we anticipate gaining more prospective students from other neighboring school districts in Orange County.

With less than ten private elementary schools in Orange County and most of those being religious schools, DIRT Charter School would likely not have a financial impact on the area's private schools due to the differences in our curriculum.

II. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

A. Achievement Goals

ELA Goals: Based on an ELA curriculum that aligns with the Common Core State Standards from grades K - 8, students will demonstrate skills in reading and writing at or above grade level. At the conclusion of each grade level, students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the Common Core State Standards in ELA found on the NYSED webpage for [NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards](#):

ELA Evaluation Methods:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the State English Arts Test (ELA) in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the tests are given. (Comparative)
- To a reasonable extent, the use of pretests, classroom observation, and post tests will provide teachers the data to facilitate further challenging topical exploration or re-teaching targets for individual or small groups of student.

- DIRT students in every grade level will complete quarterly projects that integrate ELA, environmental science, social studies, mathematics and the visual or performing arts. These projects will be documented and included in a digital portfolio.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete unit assessments to demonstrate mastery in the curriculum which is based on the Common Core Standards.

Mathematics Goals: Based on a mathematics curriculum that aligns with the Common Core State Standards from grades K - 8, students will demonstrate proficiency in adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding, and will have attained procedural fluency and a productive disposition toward mathematics. Engineering and design concepts necessary for students to apply their mathematical understanding will be taught in an age-appropriate manner. At the conclusion of each school year, students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics found on the NYSED webpage for [NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards](#):

Mathematics Evaluation Methods:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the New York State Mathematics exam in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the test is given. (Comparative)
- To a reasonable extent, the use of pretests, classroom observation, and post tests will provide teachers the data to facilitate challenging further topical exploration or re-teaching targets for individual or small groups of student.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete quarterly projects that integrate ELA, environmental science, social studies, mathematics and the visual or performing arts. These projects will be documented and included in a digital portfolio.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete unit assessments to demonstrate mastery in the curriculum which is based on the Common Core Standards.

Science Goals: Based on a science curriculum that aligns with the [proposed Common Core State Standards](#) (A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Core Ideas) from grades K - 8, students will demonstrate skills at or above grade level in science. At the conclusion of 8th grade students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the proposed Common Core State Standards in science.

Science Evaluation Methods:

- 75% of all students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years or more will score at a Level 3 or 4 on the New York State Science exam in the grade levels the test is given. (Absolute)
- DIRT students who have enrolled at DIRT for 2 full academic years will outperform the New York State's total percentage of students scoring at Level 3 or 4 by 10 percentage points, in the grade levels the test is given. (Comparative)
- To a reasonable extent, the use of pretests, classroom observation, and post tests will provide

teachers the data to facilitate challenging further topical exploration or re-teaching targets for individual or small groups of student.

- DIRT students in every grade level will complete quarterly projects that integrate ELA, environmental science, social studies, mathematics, and the visual or performing arts. These projects will be documented and included in a digital portfolio.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete unit assessments to demonstrate mastery in the curriculum which is based on the Common Core Standards.

Social Studies Goals: Based on social studies curriculum that aligns with the Common Core State Standards from grades K - 8, students will be able to cogently comprehend, discuss, research and write intelligently and insightfully with adherence to ELA standards. At the conclusion of each grade students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the Common Core State Standards in social studies found on the NYSED webpage for [NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards](#):

Social Studies Evaluation Methods:

- To a reasonable extent, the use of pretests, classroom observation, and post tests will provide teachers the data to facilitate further challenging topical exploration or re-teaching targets for individual or small groups of student.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete quarterly projects that integrate ELA, environmental science, social studies, mathematics, and the visual or performing arts. These projects will be documented and included in a digital portfolio.
- DIRT students in every grade level will complete unit assessments to demonstrate mastery in the curriculum which is based on the Common Core Standards.

Schoolwide Goal: DIRT will achieve Adequate Yearly Progress.

Evaluation 4:

- Each year the school will attain a status of “In Good Standing” under the state’s NCLB accountability system. (Absolute)

Schoolwide Goal: DIRT will demonstrate strong annual attendance and enrollment.

Evaluation 5:

- The average daily attendance rate will meet or exceed 95% each year. (Absolute)
- DIRT will retain its students at an annual rate of 90% or more during the term of its charter. (Absolute)

B. School Schedule and Calendar

Our application team has designed a balanced and innovative school schedule that will maximize student learning time while also supporting student and teacher needs. We will have four terms with a total of 180 instructional days. The New York State Education Department requires a minimum of 180 days of instruction and a five-hour school day, exclusive of lunch for full-day kindergarten through grade 6. On each instructional school day DIRT students will receive 8 hours, less a 60 minute lunch/recess, of instruction during the regular day. Enrichment classes will be scheduled to complement the classroom curriculum on a regular basis and will supplement core and special subjects.

Typical day for students K - 2

Time	Subject/Activity	Hrs
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8:00 - 8:30	Morning circle time, welcoming activities	0:30
8:30 - 9:30	Whole and small group ELA skill instruction	1:00
9:30 - 10:30	Integrated writing, illustrations, paragraph development, bookmaking, author's chair, etc. (ELA)	1:00
(8:30 - 10:30)	Response to Intervention (RTI), English Language Learners (ELL) on a regular push-in and/or pull-out basis during this time slot	
10:30 - 10:45	Nutritious snack-making, social time, clean up (A small, rotating group will go to the dining room to help with lunch preparation and table-setting.)	0:15
10:45 - 11:45	Mathematics	1:00
11:45 - 12:15	Recess (last 10 minutes as clean up for lunch)	0:30
12:15 - 12:45	Lunch (including Lunch Prep)	0:30
12:50 - 1:05	Story-time, read-alouds (ELA)	0:15
1:05 - 2:35	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab (technology, field trips, science experiments, ELA and Math Integration, etc.)	1:30
2:35 - 3:15	Art /PE (every other day)	0:40
3:15 - 3:45	Spanish/Music (every other day)	0:30
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap-up, reflections, going-home plans	0:10
3:55	Dismissal	
4:00 - 4:55	After school Enrichment Program (optional)	0:55

K - 2 Subject Area Totals

Subject	Minutes Per Day	Minutes Per Week
ELA	135	675
Math	60	300
Science/Social Studies Lab	90	450
Art	0 - 40	80 - 120
PE	0 - 40	80 - 120
Music	0 - 30	60 - 90
Spanish	0 - 30	60 - 90

Typical day for students 3 - 5

Time	Subject/Activity	Hrs
8:00 - 8:10	Welcoming activities, goals for the day	0:10
8:10 - 9:10	Whole and small group ELA skill instruction, RTI, ELL	1:00
9:10 - 9:50	Art/PE (every other day)	0:40
9:50 - 10:05	Healthy snack preparation, enjoyment, social time, clean up (A small, rotating group will go to the dining room to help with lunch preparation)	0:15
10:05 - 11:35	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab (technology, field trips, experiments, ELA and Math Integration, etc.)	1:30
11:35 - 12:35	Writing process in different genre, direct instruction, technology presentation	1:00

	skills (ELA)	
12:35 - 1:05	Recess (last 10 minutes as clean up for lunch)	0:30
1:05 - 1:35	Lunch (including Lunch Prep)	0:30
1:35 - 2:35	Mathematics	1:00
2:35 - 3:15	Spanish/Music (every other day)	0:40
3:15 - 3:45	Social Studies Lab	0:30
3:45 - 3:55	Review of goals, carry-over, pack-up	0:10
3:55	Dismissal	
4:00 - 4:55	After school Enrichment Program (optional)	0:55

3 - 5 Subject Area Totals

Subject	Minutes Per Day	Minutes Per Week
ELA	120	600
Math	60	300
Science Learning Lab	90	450
Social Studies Lab	30	150
Art	0 - 40	80 - 120
PE	0 - 40	80 - 120
Music	0 - 40	80 - 120
Spanish	0 - 40	80 - 120

Typical Day for Students 6 - 8

Time	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
8:00 - 8:10	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:10 - 8:57	ELA 1 (Reading Lab)	Music (20 wks)/Art (20 wks)	Music (20 wks)/Art (20 wks)
8:59 - 9:46	ELA 2 (Writing Lab)	Math	Science Lab
9:48 - 10:35	Spanish/PE*	Social Studies Lab	Science Lab
10:37 - 11:07	Recess	Recess	Recess
11:07 - 11:37	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:39 - 12:26	Math	Spanish/PE*	Social Studies Lab
12:28 - 1:15	Social Studies Lab	Science Lab	ELA 1 (Reading Lab)
1:17 - 2:04	Music (20 wks)/Art (20 wks)	Science Lab	ELA 2 (Writing Lab)
2:06 - 2:53	Science Lab	ELA 1 (Reading Lab)	Spanish/PE*
2:55 - 3:42	Science Lab	ELA 2 (Writing Lab)	Math
3:45 - 3:55	Pack up	Pack up	Pack up
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	Enrichment (optional)	Enrichment (optional)	Enrichment (optional)

* PE will be every other day, opposite Spanish

6 - 8 Subject Area Totals

Subject	Minutes Per Day	Minutes Per Week
ELA	94	470
Math	47	235
Science Lab	96	480
Art or Music	47	235
Social Studies Lab	47	235
PE	47*	94 - 141
Spanish	47*	94 - 141

* Every other day

Student Work Day/Week

- The school day will be from 8:00 a.m. to 3:55 p.m. with an after school program until 4:55.
- A student's placement will be flexible. Pending RTI team and parent approval students may be regrouped for one or more subject areas, possibly with another teacher, depending on ability in a subject.
- Students below grade level in Reading or Math, Special Education students and English Language Learners (ELL) will have targeted instruction through a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan. The DIRT Administrator will facilitate the scheduling of team-teaching or push in services in the general education classes. Students may also be pulled out of some classes for one-on-one or smaller group instruction one or more times a week. The classes students may be pulled from depending on their individual plan may include:
 - One or more of the ELA periods (up to 135 minutes per day)
 - Math (up to 60 minutes a day)
 - Spanish (up to 47 minutes a day)
- Science and Social Studies Labs will often take place outdoors and be a combination of direct instruction and hand on activities. Teachers may decide to do a on-going concentrated lesson each week i.e. Science one week and/or Social Studies the following week.
- A portion of Physical Education will include Personal Energy (Health & Nutrition).
- Grades 6 - 8 students will go to specialized subject area teachers. There is time built in between periods to allow for travel time between classrooms.

Teacher Work Day/Week

- Teachers' work day will be from 7:55 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day, except on Wednesdays when it will be from 7:55 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Teachers may also have responsibilities after student dismissal, which may include: tutoring, professional development, family meetings, or other meetings.
- A planning period daily when students are in special area classes.
- An uninterrupted lunch period daily.
- Teachers will have one hour staff meetings on Wednesdays, which may include common planning time to collaborate with other teachers and/or professional development.

Professional Development Opportunities Within the School Day/Week

- Teachers may have professional development after student dismissal from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
- The weekly, one hour staff meetings on Wednesdays may be used for professional development
- The daily planning period while students are at Special Area classes or PE will be a common

planning time with the other teacher of that same grade level, providing continuous improvement, collaboration and professional development.

See Attachments 3a and 3b for a Sample Weekly Student Schedule, a Sample Weekly Teacher Schedule and a Proposed First Year Calendar. For grading purposes, the calendar is divided into four quarters. See page 49 for more info on DIRT's professional development program.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

DIRT Charter School will offer a unique and innovative educational alternative to traditional public education. DIRT will strive for excellence in all academic subject areas and the fine arts, while at the same time focusing on sustainable living principles, including environmental stewardship and respect for all living things. The curriculum will be based on Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC), a curricular framework developed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). EIC is a research-based model for interdisciplinary, hands-on, and engaging learning for all learners.

Using the EIC model, all teaching and learning at DIRT will be centered on common environmental projects. Lessons across disciplines will be intertwined, and classes at a grade level will be coordinated with one another as they do their part in bringing a project together. Interdisciplinary learning fosters student's ability to see connections between academic subjects that are traditionally compartmentalized. This approach to problem solving draws on knowledge from multiple disciplines, and is a skill essential in the real world. This approach to education will allow teachers to transform traditional pedagogy and embrace a collaborative teaching style.

DIRT's project-based academic program will also set it apart from traditional public schooling. Students at DIRT will be engaged in real-world investigations that will frequently take them out of the classroom, into nature and the larger community. This approach will foster critical thinking, create an atmosphere of collaboration, and engage and empower students and teachers alike. Because projects will grow out of student-driven questioning, students will have an investment and sense of ownership regarding their learning.

The principal components of EIC include: integrated- interdisciplinary instruction, community based investigations, service learning, collaborative instruction, learner centered, constructivist approaches, cooperative and independent learning and local and natural community surroundings as a context for learning. Using these innovative approaches, teachers address state content standards and adopt instructional materials to insure that DIRT's students have authentic and engaging learning opportunities. The comprehensive nature of our EIC model curriculum has emphasis placed on addressing multiple intelligences, differentiating instruction, and hands-on, experiential learning.

The EIC provides a framework for integrating academic content areas and will compliment the sound instruction in the NYS Common Core Standards. Using the natural environment as the focal point for our curriculum allows DIRT students to become immersed in experiential investigations providing them with ample opportunities to apply their learning in a real world context.

Although subject areas are separated for discussion purposes in this document, in practice they will be connected.

English Language Arts Reading and Writing Labs: Teachers and students use ELA across the curriculum, including during the EIC community investigations, allowing students to apply strategies in real situations. The elementary and middle school literacy goal is to produce students who are critical readers and are able to document ideas through the written word. All DIRT students will have two periods of ELA every day. DIRT Charter School will facilitate excellence in literacy by incorporating three elements: NY State Standards/Common Core Standards, research proven best practices, and the mission and vision of the school through the EIC framework. These three elements anchor a coherent program of study

articulated throughout the grades.

ELA Instructional Methods:

- **Interactive Read Alouds:** Teachers model fluent reading, develop vocabulary and comprehension skills, and engage students in reading before an audience with feeling and emotion.
- **Guided Reading:** In flexible small groups based on assessed reading levels, teachers coach students in comprehension strategies as they read and discuss a single text. Non-fiction, science, cultural, and historical readings will make up the core of the DIRT classroom libraries.
- **Independent Reading:** Students select and read books at their own independent reading level to develop comprehension skills and decoding strategies, build fluency and stamina, and acquire content knowledge.
- **Phonics, Grammar and Vocabulary:** Vocabulary development with focus on spelling, phonics, and grammar to teach conventions of written and oral language. Language skills will also be addressed within the students' reading and writing and not in isolation as is emphasized in the CCSS.
- **Writer's Workshop:** Teachers lead a mini-Lesson with a clear teaching point followed by independent student writing. Teachers instruct students individually or through small- group instruction while continuously assessing their growth and development. Selections from Writer's Workshop may be included in the student's portfolio.
- **Small Group and Whole Group instruction:** Teachers will use a combination of individualized, small group and whole group instruction in order to reach every student at his or her academic level.
- **Reader's Workshop:** Students participate in mini-lessons about choosing books, close reading (analyzing specific passages), character motivation, responding in writing using evidence based claims, etc. Book talks are given where students promote and recommend books they enjoy allowing them to practice public speaking. Teachers conference with individual students for a quick chat about current reading. Small group lessons allow for teachers to work on certain skills or extend students.
- **Journal Writing:** Through the use of technology software and by keeping a written journal of the scientific inquiry process, NYSED MST Standard 2: *Information technology is used to retrieve, process, and communicate information and as a tool to enhance learning* is addressed. Each student will be required to keep an appropriate written science journal.

ELA Instructional Materials

- **Literacy by Design:** DIRT's core curriculum for Reading/Language Arts for K - 2 will be *Literacy by Design*, by Rigby, Houghton-Mifflin. *Literacy by Design* is consistent with DIRT's mission and education design because it utilizes both fiction and nonfiction selections that are based on either a science or social studies theme. This curriculum series provides both direct instruction and differentiated instruction in phonics, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills. It aligns with the New York State Learning Standards and the Common Core State Standards⁷. Its research base assures a solid literacy foundation on which to build in the upper grades.

⁷ Literacy by Design, "Connecting Reading and Writing- Program Overview," Created by authors of Literacy by Design, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 10 July 2012 < http://rigby.hmhco.com/en/literacydesign_reading.htm>.

- **Great Books:** DIRT will use [Great Books](#) to supplement the needs of K - 1 developing readers with Great Books Read-Aloud—a dynamic, easy to use language arts program. For grades 2 - 5 the new Junior Great Books® Series program provides a superb framework for teaching reading comprehension, critical thinking, vocabulary, and writing, all in the context of students sharing ideas about great literature. The fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections in Great Books Roundtable™ for grades 6 - 8 supports multiple interpretations, sparking discussions that help them flourish as readers, thinkers, writers, and listeners.
- **Non fiction and fictional materials:** DIRT students, especially those in grades 2-8, will have access to a variety of materials such as: trade books, local publications, primary source materials, online materials, audio books, novels, chapter books.

Mathematics: DIRT will facilitate high achievement in mathematics, by incorporating three elements: NY State Standards/Common Core Standards, research proven best practices, and the mission and vision of the school through the EIC framework. Math programming at DIRT incorporates instructional strategies aligned with research on effective differentiation to meet individual needs. To support a coherent instructional program, DIRT teachers may use textbooks and workbooks from *Everyday Mathematics*. *Everyday Mathematics* is in alignment with the New York Common Core Standards. In following with the EIC curriculum framework, DIRT will focus on using mathematics in authentic agricultural and environmental settings so that students will have an opportunity to apply math concepts in real life.

Mathematics Instructional Methods

- **Didactic Instruction:** Most topics will be introduced through short mini-lessons that explain mathematical concepts or procedures and demonstrate its application.
- **Guided Math Groups:** Students will be provided with ample time to practice and explore concepts while teachers provide targeted coaching and support during guided math groups and centers.
- **Problem Solving Exercises:** Problem solving exercises will be designed to help students recognize patterns and solutions of a specific type or to stimulate cognitive dissonance leading to development of a new concept.
- **Open-ended Problems:** Open-ended problems allow students to apply their skills and creativity in mathematical situations with more than one correct answer. Open-ended activities conclude with teachers providing students with clarity, connections, and closure to make the mathematics apparent and meaningful.
- **Real world contexts:** Real world contexts allow students to experience math as a meaningful human activity. Problem solving in the real world is integrated into the EIC units at each grade level, but can also involve many other meaningful applications of mathematics.

Mathematics Instructional Materials

- *Everyday Mathematics* is published by Wright Group/McGraw Hill. This research-based curriculum balances direct instruction in mathematical facts and skills with developing conceptual understanding. The program focuses on real-life problem solving and asks students to communicate their own mathematical thinking. It uses a spiraling approach, promoting retention by providing multiple exposures to important concepts and skills, often over more than one grade level.⁸ *Everyday Mathematics* is 100% aligned with the common core standards. *Everyday Mathematics* uses ongoing assessment, periodic assessment and progress check-ins that help teachers to assess whether a student is on track to meet grade-level goals.

⁸ Everyday Mathematics Resource and Information Center, Created by authors of Everyday Mathematics, The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, Mc-Graw Hill Education, 10 July 2012 <<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/>>.

- **Manipulatives, Models and Tools** will be used to develop the understanding and application of math concepts within the context of EIC.

Science Learning Lab: The Science curriculum for DIRT is the hub around which all other content revolves. All DIRT students will have the Science Learning Lab for at least 90 minutes daily. Through its science programming, DIRT Charter School furthers its mission to help students become stewards who embrace the world, using hands on learning in both the community and the classroom. Using the EIC model, science is integrated with other subject areas using units that are connected by local environmental contexts. Science instruction will take place outside, as much as possible so that students can observe and interact with what they are studying in it's natural habitat/environment. The science curriculum is coordinated between grade levels, covering the major science disciplines and then addressing the broad conceptual themes common to them all. All Science curriculum will align with the four core and component ideas of the Common Core State Standards, i.e., *Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering, Technology, and Application of Sciences.*

Science Instructional Methods

- **Didactic Instruction:** Students will be taught basic scientific information necessary to understand more complex issues and concepts, as well as the skills needed to employ the scientific method.
- **Scientific Inquiry-based Learning:** Science instruction helps students develop the ability to think and reason as scientists. Teachers build upon student's conceptual frameworks and accommodate individual differences as students construct an understanding of the natural world, the history of science, and well-established laws and theories. Students act as explorers, interacting with their peers as they do first-hand investigations and problem solving. They learn to reason as scientists by developing and investigating the types of questions that can be answered scientifically. While designing and conducting experiments, students collect evidence from a variety of sources and use appropriate equipment, technology, and tools to collect and analyze data. Mathematics and communication skills are integrated with science instruction as students develop explanations from data, then communicate and defend their conclusions. The scientific learning cycle is ongoing as students question, explore, and raise new questions.
- **Learning Laboratory:** DIRT's Learning Laboratories are based on a strategies model for integrating the teaching of core content while students learn scientific inquiry and cooperative learning. The *New York State Learning Standards for Math, Science, and Technology* and the *Living Environment Core Curriculum* for grades 9 – 12 (May 22, 2009) "assumes that the content, skills, and vocabulary... will have been taught in the elementary and middle school grades."⁹ DIRT Charter School assumes that responsibility. On a daily basis, all students will explore and test the goals of NYSED MST Standard 1: *Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.*
- **Journal Writing:** Through the use of technology software and by keeping a written journal of the scientific inquiry process, NYSED MST Standard 2: *Information technology is used to retrieve, process, and communicate information and as a tool to enhance learning* is addressed. Each student will be required to keep an appropriate written science journal.
- **Community Involvement:** The community is an integral part of DIRT. Field trips, speakers, and local partnerships enrich the learning experience. Students are given the opportunity develop an awareness of science careers and their roles, through meaningful interactions with science professionals in the community. As students consider the broader implications of human actions relating to the living systems around them, they begin to understand how they can affect the

⁹ The Living Environment Core Curriculum, (The New York State Education Department), 7.

world. For example, a Learning Lab location for DIRT Charter School will be Rogowski Farms, a local certified naturally grown vegetable farm, whose owner is a MacArthur Fellows Program (nicknamed “Genius Grant”) recipient for her farming innovations. The owner of Rogowski Farm is excited to provide students with hands-on opportunities where they will learn how their food gets to the table.

Science Instructional Materials

- **Literacy by Design:** The source we will adopt as the basis for our ELA program provides a reviewed and accepted correlation with NY ELA Common Core Standards and Science Common Core Standards.
- **Project WILD:** Grades K - 8 will utilize the *Project WILD* science curriculum that is offered through a national network of State Wildlife Agencies and Sponsors. *Project WILD* is a conservation and environmental education program that is based on the premise that young people have a vital interest in learning about our natural world.¹⁰ DIRT teachers will attend instructional workshops offered by certified leaders and supported by a network of sponsoring state, national, and international agencies in order to be trained in the use of *Project WILD*'s core curricular materials.
- **New York Agriculture in the Classroom:** The daily outdoor learning laboratory will include, but not be limited to the application in our on-site school garden of the principles from *New York Agriculture in the Classroom: Kids Growing Food*.

Social Studies Lab: In Grades K - 2, Social Studies will be integrated throughout subject areas as students look at issues of sustainability from a wide range of social systems. In grades 3 - 8 the Social Studies Lab period will be used to cover Social Studies curriculum and how it integrates with other subjects. Social Studies curriculum will be developed based on the New York State learning standards and will be designed to include units on the following topics: community, school, governments, economics, transportation, agriculture, culture/society, geography, history, and New York State. DIRT teachers will guide students to make local connections focused on these issues and they will become part of a daily laboratory learning experience where students discuss, debate and use “*Systems*” thinking to help students understand the complex interactions between NATURAL and SOCIAL systems.¹¹ By using “*Systems*” thinking, students will develop strategies that facilitate the solving of complex problems.

Social Studies Instructional Methods:

- **Didactic Instruction:** Students will be taught basic historical and geographic information necessary to understand more complex issues and concepts.
- **Project-based Learning:** Through hands-on immersive projects students will explore history and geography topics in a way that reinforces memory and understanding. Rather than just learn about the actions and conclusions of others, students will also make decisions, solve problems, and reach their own understandings.
- **Interactive Student Notebook:** Notebooks have a “left side-right side” orientation to help students organize, and process new information. The left side is used primarily for processing new ideas. The right side of the notebook is used for recording class notes. Students use both their visual and linguistic intelligences. Note taking becomes an active process. Notebooks help students to systematically organize as they learn. Notebooks become a portfolio of individual learning.

Social Studies Instructional Materials:

¹⁰ Project WILD, “About Us- Conserving wildlife through education,” Council for Environmental Education (CEE), Published by Project WILD, 10 July 2012 <<http://www.projectwild.org/aboutus.htm>>.

¹¹ Patricia Vathis and Jean Wallace, “Systems Thinking and Green Woods Charter School's EIC Model,” 10 July 2012, <<http://www.greenwoodscharter.org/pdf/SystemsThinking.pdf>>.

- **Primary Sources:** Students will research and use primary sources as much as possible. The internet will be a valuable resource for finding and deciphering primary sources.

Foreign Language: DIRT will offer foreign language instruction in Spanish. All DIRT students K - 8 will have Spanish every other day. Spanish is the second most common language spoken in Orange County. The Orange County area has many farms, and the majority of farm workers and their children speak both Spanish and English. By incorporating foreign language instruction in Spanish, starting in kindergarten, we hope to encourage English as a Second Language students to enroll at our school and succeed. The curriculum for Spanish will be based on New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English. By choosing Spanish, we also intend to feature Spanish-speaking students as the peer tutors to those students for whom Spanish is not their first language. This should be confidence-builder they do not typically experience.

Technology: Technology at DIRT will not be a separate class. It will be integrated into every subject area. Many textbooks and resources are becoming digital, and technology provides an ever expanding potential for students to interact with subject matter. The technology that is used at DIRT will be portable, rather than limited to a computer lab, in order to enable our students to fully engage with digitized information and allow them greater freedom in pursuing lines of inquiry. Students will develop projects that demonstrate what they have learned. Technological literacy will be key in preparing students with the 21st-century skills of problem solving, innovation, and communication. Flexibility in the use of technology at DIRT will be important and will change as new technology emerges.

Music: The DIRT Charter School will provide a comprehensive music program that fully integrates with all other core subjects. Using the four New York State Standards in the Arts as a guide, we will provide every student with the opportunity to perform, compose, listen to, and participate in music by providing chorus and general music classes for all students. In addition to specific instruction, frequent collaboration with local musicians will be essential to the curriculum that we will provide. Chorus and Instrumental Band and Strings will be offered for grades 3 – 8 during our after-school enrichment program. Students will be able to rent instruments from the several reliable music companies in our area.

Art: The visual arts will be an important part of the curriculum at DIRT Charter School. Through planning with classroom teachers, meaningful art experiences will be integrated into the classroom. Students will create projects that focus on a specific topic that classroom teachers have covered. Students learning in art will be further enriched by having specific art instruction twice a week. We will also offer students a weekly extended arts enrichment period. Art teachers at DIRT will collaborate with local community arts organizations, such as the Wallkill River School and Orange County Arts Council, to create opportunities for students to get involved in exciting arts-related projects in Orange County. DIRT art teachers will be able to plan field trips for students to many of the art and cultural institutions in nearby New York City.

Physical Education and Health: P.E. plays an integral role in the EIC curriculum. “P.E.” at DIRT Charter School stands for Personal Energy, as well as Physical Education. Every student will have P.E. two to three times a week. PE will not only provide physical activity but will also focus on: nutrition, healthy personal choices, fitness, and one’s own Personal Energy.

In P.E., students will learn about human growth and development and the factors affecting development, such as genetics/family health history, cultural values, and lifestyle choices. Students develop decision-making and refusal skills to cope with peer pressure. The school’s gardens will be used as a teaching aid and outdoor laboratory. By connecting students to the source of their food in everyday situations, teaching them how it is grown, harvested and prepared, they discover the health and ecological benefits of sustainability, care for self, the community and the wider world.

In grades K-3 students develop general understanding of the workings of their bodies and how to keep their bodies healthy. In grades 4 and beyond, students have regular health education coursework involving learning about human body systems and ways to stay healthy. In grade 6 and beyond, students will have sex education and drug prevention education provided by physical education teacher in cooperation with school nurse and local medical agencies.

After School Enrichment/Clubs/Organizations: DIRT will offer a one hour enrichment period after every school day where students may choose from activities in the: arts, sports, or homework help. This will be an optional portion of the day, and families will pay an activity fee to participate in any activities they sign up for. Parents/guardians will provide transportation home for students enrolled in any enrichment activity. DIRT will partner with local organizations, such as the The Wallkill River School, a nonprofit artist's cooperative, and Footings Inc., a agency that runs a Club Rec program at schools in our area, to provide staff for after school enrichment. As part of DIRT's after school enrichment program, Science Olympiad will be offered to students. Science Olympiad competitions bring students together each year who have cross-trained in science disciplines in preparation for competition in a variety of events, with an emphasis on active, hands-on group participation. DIRT may also hire part time instructors. Instructors will either be paid through a partner organization or by DIRT through the activity fee. We will help students who may need financial assistance in order to participate in enrichment.

At DIRT, teachers and administrators will encourage students to take the initiative in expanding their studies, and extracurricular activities to include student run clubs and organizations. If students feel passionate about a particular issue, field of study, or hobby they will be given the opportunity to apply to create a club to further explore that focus with their peers. When students apply to form a club, they will be asked to identify a teacher who will act as a mentor and guide for that club. Students will be "co-creators" with their mentor. We feel that student run clubs and organizations give students a sense of competence, responsibility, and are a creative source of inspiration for youth. Student Clubs at DIRT will meet during after school enrichment.

Gardening: To unify all DIRT's educational and behavioral goals into an authentic, multi-age experience, DIRT students, faculty, and community will maintain a year-round garden on the school site. *New York Agriculture in the Classroom: Kids Growing Food (KGF)*, which is sponsored by Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, will provide curriculum and activity guidance for the growth of the garden. The outdoor laboratory experience will include garden maintenance and accomplishing the stated goals of the KGF project: *to teach children responsibility, a caring for nature, and an understanding of agriculture, science, relationships, and life processes.*

Community Service: One of DIRT's objectives is to guide students to be respectful, compassionate, and productive students. DIRT plans to achieve this mission objective through using community based learning. Throughout the academic year, students of all ages will participate in a variety of community service opportunities unique to each grade level and relevant to their academic studies. Through introducing students to community needs and public purpose, academic learning will be enriched, civic skills will be achieved, and students will have a gained "voice" and sense of involvement in their community. Students will be asked to reflect on community service projects as a means to exercise compassionate critical thinking. Participating in community service efforts will provide students with confidence that they too are contributing to society in a meaningful way, while strengthening ties with the surrounding community through positive service.

D. Assessment System

The DIRT Charter School subscribes to the relationship of curriculum, teaching strategies, student

learning, assessment through multiple measures, and data-driven decisions that are based on the findings. Our school must also evaluate its own mission, objectives, and overall educational priorities. This requires a combination of standardized and flexible ways to measure success. Assessment will be conducted on an annual, quarterly, weekly, and daily basis in all curriculum areas at different frequencies. They will serve as opportunities for teachers and administrators to follow the overall progress of the school and to critique the program, adapt instructional approaches, and establish new goals and expectations to better serve the student population. As part of the enrollment process, parents will be required to give permission to DIRT Charter School to request and receive prior data from the student's previous school(s). This information will become part of the student's assessment record.

Diagnostic Assessments: DIRT will use diagnostic assessments to determine our incoming students' knowledge, skill levels and interests and to identify signs of special needs as part of our Response To Intervention (RTI) process.

- **Pearson's Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA):** At quarterly intervals that include the beginning and end of the school year, the teacher will administer Pearson's Diagnostic Reading Assessment, DRA, to each student. The teacher teams and principal will interpret and monitor individual progress and cohort progress throughout the school year for steady and/or exceptional progress. Response to Intervention plans will be developed by the RTI team at the first sign of reading, math, or emotional difficulties.
- **Stanford Achievement Test:** DIRT will adopt the Stanford Achievement Test, 10th edition, which gives national and local norms in ELA and Math. This will be administered in grades K – 6 (and later 7 - 8) during the Spring of each year. The cohort and individual data will become a contributing part of the school's action plan for the following school year.
- **New York State ELA Tests:** Students in grades 3-8 take this test in spring
- **New York State Math Tests:** Students in grades 3-8 take this test in spring.
- **New York State Science Tests:** Students in grades 4 and 8 take this test in spring.
- **End-of-Year Tests:** the end-of-year tests from all previous years will be used as a baseline for assessing the effectiveness and progress for academically, socially, emotionally, or language-based needy students. The special education department, ELL department, counseling department, and advisory team leaders (and any parental input) will all be involved in developing new strategies to influence the hard-to-reach student population.

Formative Assessments: Teachers will be expected to identify formative assessments in their lesson plans and conduct regular checks for understanding during instruction. Students will also be taught how to use formative feedback to maximize their own learning.

- **KWL:** As part of the introduction and later summary of each grade level's quarterly theme, teachers will conduct an age-appropriate K-W-L (What do you already **K**now about this theme; What do you **W**ant to Know?, and summarizing, What did you **L**earn about this theme?). Teachers can use this information in a variety of grouping, challenging, and teaching/re-teaching decisions. It is the nature of DIRT to provoke higher level thinking and metacognition in all of its students. Additionally, the "What do you want to know?" portion of this analytical tool lends itself to the design of more challenging research projects for those students responding to more complex materials and ways of thinking. The KWL product and its supportive learning examples will become a part of each student's portfolio.
- **Textbook:** The literacy and mathematics textbook programs that DIRT adopts will provide daily and periodic activities to monitor and adjust for individual progress as part of their program in ELA and Mathematics.

Benchmark Assessments: Teachers will administer benchmark assessments to measure progress towards goals.

- Quarterly Authentic Performance Assessment--"Ta-Da" and Rubric:** At the beginning of each marking period, teachers will present students with a Science and/or content-integrated research question. The teacher will also distribute and review the rubric that will help students to understand how they will be assessed during their presentation. At the end of each marking period students will develop an authentic assessment product to "show what they know" in order for others to also learn. The product will contain a written component, a self-assessment of how the student worked cooperatively, and a demonstration through one of the Arts as to how the student(s) transferred the answers to the research question into a performance or demonstration project. Throughout the course of each year, each student will experience the transfer of knowledge he or she learned during that quarter into one Arts discipline experience each year: (1) Visual Arts, (2) Music, (3) Movement/Dance, or (4) Theater/Drama representation. Presented in a Science Fair-like atmosphere, student products will provide the show that helps to answer the quarter's Essential Research Question; other DIRT students and any interested parents/community members will be the audience.

Depending on the teachers' decisions and the nature of the product, students can create individual or cooperative group products. A completed rubric and a brief summary of each student's quarterly product accomplishments will be included in the student's digital portfolio.

Special subject teachers will teach the technical skills to develop each product, e.g., P.E. teaches movement/choreography skills for a dance on the effects of erosion; Art teacher gives lessons on the use and care of drafting equipment for poster design, etc.

Products within each of the four disciplines of the Arts are unlimited and offer unique opportunities for creative and critical thinking skills. An example of the planning for and completion of the annual summative experience for each student is also shown below and will be annually included in the student's digital portfolio.

1/3/2013 DRAFT

For School Year: 20__/20__

Developing Innovative Rural Thinking

Quarterly Authentic Assessment Planning and Scheduling

Directions: This planning guide is to be used for the quarterly D.I.R.T. Fair where students will demonstrate and discuss with others about the answers they learned to the essential questions posed at the beginning of the quarter. DIRT faculty and staff should choose the quarter and Arts mode of expression, as well as whether each selection for the D.I.R.T. Fair will be as a grade level or the entire school.

Sharing What You Know With Others:

Grade Level: _____				
Quarterly Thematic Question to Show the Answer:				
	First Quarter (Social Studies Emphasis)	Second Quarter (Math Emphasis)	Third Quarter (Science Emphasis)	Fourth Quarter (Language Arts Emphasis)
Visual Arts				
Music				
Movement, Dance				
Theater, Drama				

An example of the rubric to assess a grade 3-6 student's learning and transfer of knowledge into a the final performance and written product is:

Developing Innovative Rural Thinking						
<i>Assessing Student Learning in Research Performance: a Rubric</i>						
GRADES 3 - 6						
<i>STUDENT'S NAME:</i> _____		<i>DATE:</i> _____		<i>Arts Form:</i> _____		
<i>My Research Question was:</i>						
CATEGORY	EXEMPLARY 3 POINTS	PROFICIENT 2 POINTS	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT 1 POINT	UNSATISFACTORY 0 POINTS	TEACHER POINTS	SELF ASSESSMENT
CONTENT						
Knowledge of Subject	Student elaborately answered the question with details.	Student easily answered questions, but did not add details.	Student was not comfortable with the ability to answer the question.	Student is unable to answer questions about the research.	___/3	___/3
Background Research & Organization of Resources	Located and selected information; audience could follow interesting information & its logical sequence	Used a few resources; audience could follow the information that was presented	Location of resources was limited; difficult to follow any sequence of presentation	Unable to locate usable information; audience could not follow.	___/3	___/3
RELATING CONCEPTS						
Use of creative & critical thinking	Student elaborately demonstrated how the content related to the Arts; an excellent selection of details	Student showed some fresh content insight into the product	Student showed a vague demonstration of how the content related to the product. There were few supporting details.	Student did not appear to make the connection of content to the product.	___/3	___/3
COOPERATIVE WORK						
Ability to work as a team	Student was part of a balanced contribution from each group member	Assisted to answer the research question	Completed answer independently with some group work	Completed answer independently or did not complete	___/3	___/3
ARTISTIC SKILLS						
Use of tools & craftsmanship	Completed the product with mastery of tools & skills.	Completed the product with adequate skills use	Demonstrated some use of the tools & skills required to complete.	Showed a need to practice use of tools & skills for completing.	___/3	___/3

Summative Assessments: The DIRT mission and goals reflect what the students will need to know, what students need to be like, and what students need to be able to do that are a part of the New York State and Common Core Learning Standards. Furthermore, by being taught in and learning from the expectations of the DIRT curricula, students will meet or exceed the expectations from the concomitant mandated assessments. Therefore, we do not subscribe to any “test prep” time beyond student exposure to testing formats and test-taking strategies.

- **New York State ELA Tests:** Students in grades 3-8 take this test in spring
- **New York State Math Tests:** Students in grades 3-8 take this test in spring.
- **New York State Science Tests:** Students in grades 4 and 8 take this test in spring.
- **End-of-Year Tests:** the end-of-year tests from all previous years will be used as a baseline for assessing the effectiveness and progress for academically, socially, emotionally, or language-based needy students. The special education department, ELL department, counseling department, and advisory team leaders (and any parental input) will all be involved in developing new strategies to influence the hard-to-reach student population.
- **Portfolio Assessment:** Each student will maintain a portfolio of individual “best works.” Prior to beginning the inquiry for answers to Essential Questions, teachers will either guide students in development of , or review with them, a developmentally appropriate, Standards-based rubric for each student’s product that will be considered for inclusion. The example above is just one example. Technology will assist in how to include formative assessment examples in an individual digital portfolio. The portfolio will also include two other examples of the individual student’s ability to communicate in writing:
 - The Learning Laboratory journal
 - A final written expression that includes the student’s thought processes and editing as he or she goes through the writing process toward the final piece.

The teacher will set a reasonable, but no less than every two weeks, schedule where the teacher conferences with the student about the learning laboratory journal and/or the selection of best

work pieces to include or replace in the portfolio. A consistent and efficient means to note items discussed and guidance given will be developed during professional development times. These will become part of the Learning Laboratory Journal. The digital portfolio will be constantly updated during conferences with the student. Its intention is to show growth and improvement in all areas during the time each student participates in DIRT.

Data Collection and Analysis: The Principal will be responsible for coordinating the administration of assessments with most of the implementation delegated to classroom teachers. Training will be provided to teachers on how to properly administer assessments, collect data, analyze results and develop action plans. Grade level teams will be expected to review data at least monthly and create concrete action plans. Consequently, item and error analysis as well as disaggregation will be employed to:

- Identify topics that students have not mastered and will need to be re-taught,
- Identify struggling students who need remediation or advanced students who need enrichment,
- Identify performance by class to determine the efficacy of individual teachers, and
- Evaluate overall curriculum and professional development.

Use of Results: The most difficult part of using data can be linking it to an appropriate intervention. The challenge is not to provide more of the same, but instead to provide different instructional strategies. Here is how we envision using assessment results at DIRT:

Teachers:

- Identify students' specific learning challenges early by assessing their mastery of specific standards and objectives.
- Create lesson plans designed specifically to remedy deficits and accelerate learning.
- Organize and rearrange flexible small group instruction to meet students' needs.
- Facilitate communication between teachers and parents.
- Monitor progress of struggling students and revise intervention plans with RTI team.
- Enhance collaboration among teachers.

School Leaders:

- Evaluate and hold accountable teachers and other staff.
- Evaluate and improve programs, e.g., curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Facilitate communication between teachers, intervention staff, administrators and parents.
- Monitor the RTI process and ensure students are placed in appropriate interventions.
- With RTI team, Identify students for referral to CSE for evaluation, change of IEP.
- Monitor services and interventions for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Identify school and individual teacher's needs and guide implementation of staff development.
- Facilitate communication with parents, the board and the public.
- Monitor and report on progress towards meeting accountability goals.
- If necessary, the DIRT Program will be adjusted and refined for continuing progress.
- Determine the outcome of completed professional development and plan for additional professional development

Board of Trustees:

- Evaluate the performance of the school leader.
- Monitor and report on progress towards meeting accountability goals and mission.
- Review and approve budget to determine optimum allocation of resources.
- Evaluate policies and procedures and revise to ensure achievement of mission and goals.
- Facilitate communication with the school leader and authorizer.

Parents:

- Monitor child's performance using unit tests, report cards and conferences.

- Identify area in which they can help their child learn.

Students:

- Use teacher feedback to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop plans for improvement.
- Identify appropriate levels of challenge, e.g., just right books for independent reading.
- Demonstrate growth over time.

Reporting: Results of any and all assessment tools and how they are used for educational decisions will be a part of two scheduled parent-teacher-student conferences. One conference will be after the first quarter; the second will be after the third quarter. Students will be invited to participate in these conferences and to respond with questions and suggestions for continued academic and behavioral improvement and goal-setting. Teachers will be compensated with commensurate release time. A parent, student, or teacher may request additional conferences throughout the school year. Staff members will be expected to respond to any parent, student, or administrative communication within 24 hours. If the teacher feels the request should involve others, it is the teacher’s responsibility to contact the necessary individuals or groups.

Staff Evaluation Criteria: A staff evaluation will be developed by the applicants that follows the following guidelines:

- DIRT’s governing board will use all student summative assessment data as 50% of the evaluation of instructional effectiveness, teacher performance, the professional development plan, and progress towards the schools goals.
- The remaining 50% will be from principal’s regular and consistent classroom observations and student results in formative assessment collections, portfolios, authentic assessment, and presentations.

Administration Evaluation Criteria: A monthly evaluation of the principal will be from written feedback from the governing board. Prior to each written feedback, the principal will participate in an open discussion with at least one Board member. At the end of the school year, the principal will receive an annual summative and written evaluation that reflects the principal’s achievements in DIRT’s goals and mission.

E. Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Promotion Standards: Promotion from grade to grade will be based on the student’s (at least minimum) achievement of the Standards-based grade level expectations. The teacher, principal, and other applicable professional team members will make a recommendation for promotion that is based on continued improvement, as evidenced in formative and summative data, and the student’s response to any required interventions.

Exit Standards: In order to complete school at DIRT Charter School, a student must demonstrate mastery of skills, content and character in all subjects. Our sample exit standards below are for the 2nd (lower elementary) and 5th grade (upper elementary) in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science based on the Common Core Learning Standards.

English Language Arts - 2nd grade
Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read unfamiliar informational texts to collect and interpret data, facts, and ideas, with assistance - Read and understand written directions - Locate information in a text that is needed to solve a problem, with assistance - Identify main ideas and supporting details in informational texts, with assistance

- Recognize and use organizational features of texts, to locate information, with assistance
- Relate data and facts from informational texts to prior information and experience, with assistance
- Compare and contrast information on one topic from two different sources, with assistance
- Identify a conclusion that summarizes the main idea, with assistance
- Select books to meet informational needs, with assistance
- Identify and interpret facts taken from maps, graphs, charts, and other visuals, with assistance
- Use graphic organizers to record significant details from informational texts, with assistance
- Select literature on the basis of personal needs and interests from a variety of genres and authors, with assistance
- Engage in purposeful oral reading in small and large groups
- Read print-based and electronic literary texts silently on a daily basis for enjoyment
- Explain the difference between fact and fiction, with assistance
- Use previous reading and life experiences to understand literature, with assistance
- Use graphic organizers to record significant details to compare and contrast characters and events in stories,
- Summarize main ideas and supporting details from literary text, both orally and in writing, with assistance
- Evaluate the content by identifying, the author's purpose, important and unimportant details, whether events, actions, characters, and/or setting are realistic
- Judge the accuracy of content, with assistance from teachers and parents/caregivers
- Share reading experiences to build relationships with peers or adults; for example, read together silently or aloud
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the writer
- Recognize the types of language that are appropriate to social communication

Writing

- Use two sources of information in writing a report
- Take notes to record facts by following teacher directions, with assistance
- State a main idea and support it with facts, with assistance
- Use organizational patterns, such as time/order, for expository writing
- Connect personal experiences to new information from school subject areas, with assistance
- Use spelling resources, such as dictionaries, word walls, and/or computer software, to spell words correctly
- Produce clear, well-organized, short reports to demonstrate understanding of a topic
- Support explanations with evidence from text
- Maintain a portfolio that includes informational writing as a method of reviewing work
- Use resources such as personal experiences to stimulate own writing
- Use prewriting tools, such as semantic webs and concept maps, to organize ideas and information
- State a main idea and provide supporting details from the text
- Use relevant examples, such as reasons to support ideas, with assistance
- Use effective vocabulary in expository writing, with assistance
- Use details from stories or informational texts to predict events
- Maintain a portfolio that includes written analysis and evaluation as a method of reviewing work
- Share the process of writing with peers and adults; for example, write with a partner
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and cultural traditions of the recipient
- Use the tone, vocabulary, and sentence structure of informal conversation, with assistance
- Maintain a portfolio that includes writing as a method of reviewing work

Listening

- Acquire information and/or understand procedures
- Identify essential details, with assistance
- Determine a sequence of steps given, with assistance
- Identify main ideas and supporting details, with assistance
- Interpret information by drawing on prior knowledge and experience, with assistance
- Collect information, with assistance
- Distinguish between fact and opinion, with assistance
- Evaluate the speaker's style of delivery by using criteria such as volume and tone of voice
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and culture of the speaker

Speaking

- Provide simple directions
- Express an opinion
- Ask questions
- Summarize, with assistance
- Provide a sequence of steps

- Describe a problem and suggest a solution
- State a main idea with supporting examples and details, with assistance
- Present a short oral report, using at least one source of information
- Use complete sentences, using age- and content appropriate vocabulary
- Discuss the impact of illustrations and titles in evaluating ideas, information, and experiences
- Use personal experience and knowledge to analyze new ideas
- Ask and respond to questions
- Speak with appropriate rate and volume for the audience
- Take turns speaking in a group
- Respect the age, gender, social position, and cultural traditions of the listener when speaking
- Avoid interrupting in social conversation

English Language Arts - 5th grade

Reading

- Use the table of contents and indexes to locate information
- Read to collect and interpret data, facts, and ideas from multiple sources
- Read the steps in a procedure in order to accomplish a task such as completing a science experiment
- Skim material to gain an overview of content or locate specific information
- Use text features, such as headings, captions, and titles, to understand and interpret informational texts
- Recognize organizational formats to assist in comprehension of informational texts
- Identify missing information and irrelevant information
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Identify information that is implied rather than stated
- Compare and contrast information on one topic from multiple sources
- Recognize how new information is related to prior knowledge or experience
- Identify main ideas and supporting details in informational texts to distinguish relevant and irrelevant information
- Make inferences and draw conclusions, on the basis of information from the text, with assistance
- Read, view, and interpret literary texts from a variety of genres
- Define characteristics of different genres
- Select literary texts on the basis of personal needs and interests and read silently for enjoyment for extended periods
- Evaluate information, ideas, opinions, and themes in texts by identifying a central idea and supporting details that are primary and those that are less important, statements of fact, opinion, and exaggeration, and missing information.
- Share reading experiences to build a relationship with peers or adults
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the writer

Writing

- Use at least three sources of information in writing a report, with assistance
- Take notes to organize relevant data, facts, and ideas, with assistance, and use notes as part of prewriting activities
- State a main idea and support it with details and examples
- Compare and contrast ideas and information from two sources
- Write labels or captions for graphics, such as charts, graphs, and diagrams, to convey information
- Adopt an organizational format, such as chronological order, that is appropriate for informational writing
- Use paragraphing to organize ideas and information, with assistance
- Maintain a portfolio that includes informational writing
- Use strategies, such as note taking, semantic webbing, or mapping, to plan and organize writing
- Use supporting evidence from text to evaluate ideas, information, themes, or experiences
- Use information and ideas from other subject areas and personal experiences to form and express opinions
- Use precise vocabulary in writing analysis and evaluation, with assistance
- Maintain a writing portfolio that includes writing for critical analysis and evaluation
- Share the process of writing with peers and adults
- Respect the age, gender, position, and cultural traditions of the recipient
- Develop a personal voice that enables the reader to get to know the writer
- Maintain a portfolio that includes writing for social communication

Listening

- Follow instructions that provide information about a task or assignment
- Identify essential details for note taking
- Distinguish between fact and opinion

- Identify information that is implicit rather than stated
- Connect new information to prior knowledge or experience
- Distinguish different genres, such as story, biography, poem, or play, with assistance
- Use personal experience and prior knowledge to interpret and respond to literary texts and performances
- Use prior knowledge and experiences to analyze the content of presentations
- Recognize friendly communication on the basis of volume and tone of the speaker's voice

Speaking

- Ask probing questions
- Interview peers
- Share information from personal experience
- Share information from a variety of texts
- State a main idea and support it with facts, details, and examples
- Compare and contrast information
- Present reports of approximately five minutes for teachers and peers
- Summarize main points
- Use notes, outlines, and visual aids appropriate to the presentation
- Ask questions and respond to questions for clarification
- Use notes or outlines appropriately in presentations
- Use the informal language of social communication
- Use the rules of conversation, such as avoid interrupting and respond respectfully: please/thank you

Mathematics - 2nd grade

Numbers and Numeration

- Count on by 1s, 2s, 5s, 10s, 25s, and 100s past 1,000 and back by 1s, 10s, and 100s from any number less than 1,000 with and without number grids, number lines, and calculators.
- Read, write, and model with manipulatives whole numbers up to 10,000; identify places in such numbers and the values of the digits in those places; read and write money amounts in dollars-and-cents notation.
- Use manipulatives and drawings to model fractions as equal parts of a region or a collection; describe the models and name the fractions.
- Recognize numbers as odd or even.
- Use tally marks, arrays, and numerical expressions involving addition and subtraction to give equivalent names for whole numbers.
- Use manipulatives and drawings to model equivalent names for $\frac{1}{2}$.
- Compare and order whole numbers up to 10,000; use area models to compare fractions.

Operations and Computation

- Demonstrate automaticity with all addition facts through $10 + 10$ and fluency with the related subtraction facts.
- Use manipulatives, number grids, tally marks, mental arithmetic, paper & pencil, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of multi-digit whole numbers; describe the strategies used; calculate and compare values of coin and bill combinations.
- Make reasonable estimates for whole number addition and subtraction problems; explain how the estimates were obtained.
- Identify and describe change, comparison, and parts-and-total situations; use repeated addition, arrays, and skip counting to model multiplication; use equal sharing and equal grouping to model division.

Data and Chance

- Collect and organize data or use given data to create tally charts, tables, graphs, and line plots.
- Use graphs to ask and answer simple questions and draw conclusions; find the maximum, minimum, mode, and median of a data set.
- Describe events using certain, likely, unlikely, impossible, and other basic probability terms; explain the choice of language.

Measurement and Reference Frames

- Estimate length with and without tools; measure length to the nearest inch and centimeter; use standard and nonstandard tools to measure and estimate weight.
- Partition rectangles into unit squares and count unit squares to find areas.
- Describe relationships between days in a week and hours in a day.
- Make exchanges between coins and bills.

- Read temperature on both the Fahrenheit and Celsius scales.
- Tell and show time to the nearest five minutes on an analog clock; tell and write time in digital notation.

Geometry

- Draw line segments and identify parallel line segments.
- Identify, describe, and model plane and solid figures including circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, hexagons, trapezoids, rhombuses, spheres, cylinders, rectangular prisms, pyramids, cones, and cubes.
- Create and complete two-dimensional symmetric shapes or designs.

Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

- Extend, describe, and create numeric, visual, and concrete patterns; describe rules for patterns and use them to solve problems; use words and symbols to describe and write rules for functions involving addition and subtraction and use those rules to solve problems.
- Read, write, and explain expressions and number sentences using the symbols $+$, $-$, $=$, $>$, and $<$; solve number sentences involving addition and subtraction; write expressions and number sentences to model number stories.
- Describe the Commutative and Associative Properties of Addition and the Additive Identity and apply them to mental arithmetic problems.

Mathematics - 5th grade

Numbers and Numeration

- Read and write whole numbers and decimals; identify places in such numbers and the values of the digits in those places; use expanded notation to represent whole numbers and decimals.
- Solve problems involving percents and discounts; describe and explain strategies used; identify the unit whole in situations involving fractions.
- Identify prime and composite numbers; factor numbers; find prime factorizations.
- Use numerical expressions involving one or more of the basic four arithmetic operations, grouping symbols, and exponents to give equivalent names for whole numbers; convert between base-10, exponential, and repeated-factor notations.
- Use numerical expressions to find and represent equivalent names for fractions, decimals, and percents; use and explain multiplication and division rules to find equivalent fractions and fractions in simplest form; convert between fractions and mixed numbers; convert between fractions, decimals, and percents.
- Compare and order rational numbers; use area models, benchmark fractions, and analyses of numerators and denominators to compare and order fractions and mixed numbers; describe strategies used to compare fractions and mixed numbers.

Operations and Computation

- Use manipulatives, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of whole numbers, decimals, and signed numbers; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Demonstrate automaticity with multiplication and division fact extensions.
- Use manipulatives, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the multiplication of whole numbers and decimals and the division of multidigit whole numbers and decimals by whole numbers; express remainders as whole numbers or fractions as appropriate; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Use mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers; describe the strategies used and explain how they work.
- Use area models, mental arithmetic, paper-and-pencil algorithms and models, and calculators to solve problems involving the multiplication of fractions and mixed numbers; use visual models, paper-and-pencil methods, and calculators to solve problems involving the division of fractions; describe the strategies used.
- Make reasonable estimates for whole number and decimal addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems and fraction and mixed number addition and subtraction problems; explain how the estimates were obtained.
- Use repeated addition, arrays, area, and scaling to model multiplication and division; use ratios expressed as words, fractions, percents, and with colons; solve problems involving ratios of parts of a set to the whole set.

Data and Chance

- Collect and organize data or use given data to create graphic displays with reasonable titles, labels, keys, and intervals.
- Use the maximum, minimum, range, median, mode, and mean and graphs to ask and answer questions, draw conclusions, and make predictions.
- Describe events using certain, very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely, impossible and other basic probability terms; use more likely, equally likely, same chance, 50-50, less likely, and other basic probability terms to compare events; explain the choice of language

- Predict the outcomes of experiments, test the predictions using manipulatives, and summarize the results; compare predictions based on theoretical probability with experimental results; use summaries and comparisons to predict future events; express the probability of an event as a fraction, decimal, or percent.

Measurement and Reference Frames

- Estimate length with and without tools; measure length with tools to the nearest 1/8 inch and millimeter estimate the measure of angles with and without tools; use tools to draw angles with given measures.
- Describe and use strategies to find the perimeter of polygons and the area of circles; choose and use appropriate methods, including formulas, to find the areas of rectangles, parallelograms, and triangles, and the volume of a prism; define pi as the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter.
- Describe relationships among U.S. customary units of measure and among metric units of measure.
- Use ordered pairs of numbers to name, locate, and plot points in all four quadrants of a coordinate grid.

Geometry

- Identify, describe, compare, name, and draw right, acute, obtuse, straight, and reflex angles; determine angle measures in vertical and supplementary angles and by applying properties of sums of angle measures in triangles and quadrangles.
- Describe, compare, and classify plane and solid figures using appropriate geometric terms; identify congruent figures and describe their properties.
- Identify, describe, and sketch examples of reflections, translations, and rotations.

Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

- Extend, describe, and create numeric patterns; describe rules for patterns and use them to solve problems; write rules for functions involving the four basic arithmetic operations; represent functions using words, symbols, tables, and graphs and use those representations to solve problems.
- Determine whether number sentences are true or false; solve open number sentences and explain the solutions; use a letter variable to write an open sentence to model a number story; use a pan-balance model to solve linear equations in one unknown.
- Evaluate numeric expressions containing grouping symbols and nested grouping symbols; insert grouping symbols and nested grouping symbols to make number sentences true; describe and use the precedence of multiplication and division over addition and subtraction.
- Describe and apply properties of arithmetic.

Science - 2nd grade

Physical Science – Matter and Its Interaction

- Analyze data from testing objects made from different materials to determine if a proposed object functions as intended.
- Design an object built from a small set of pieces to solve a problem and compare solutions designed by peers given the same set of pieces.
- Analyze data from tests of a student-designed tool to determine if the tool measures weight or size accurately, compared to standard measuring tools.
- Identify arguments that are supported by evidence that some changes caused by heating and cooling can be reversed and some cannot.

Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions

- Design and conduct investigations of objects moving at different speeds and compare the change of an objects motion and shape before and after a collision.
- Carry out investigations to provide evidence that an object may stay in one place, move, or change shape when pushed or pulled.
- Make a claim about the effectiveness of a solution that applies a push or a pull to change the speed or direction of an object to solve a problem.

Energy

- Carry out investigations to determine the relationship among friction, motion, and the warming of objects.
- Define a problem caused by too much or too little friction between objects and develop solutions that address the problem.

Life Science – Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

- Develop and use models to compare how living things depend on their surroundings to meet their needs in the places they live.
- Define a simple problem and test solutions to determine which better fulfills the function of an animal necessary for the

reproduction of a flowering plant. (Focus-plant pollination & seed dispersal by animals)
 -Design a solution to a problem to a problem caused when a habitat changes and some of the plants and animals may no longer be able to live there.
 -Make observations about the variety of plants and animals living in an area and identify the specific places they live in order to make comparisons between different areas.

Earth and Space Science

-Use observations to construct explanations about how landforms and bodies of water provide homes for living things.
 -Develop models to investigate how wind and water can move Earth materials from one place to another and change the shape of the land quickly or slowly.
 -Communicate information about possible design solutions to the loss of homes on land for living things resulting from wind or water changing the shape of the land.
 -Use drawings and physical models to test, compare strengths and weaknesses, and communicate design solutions that slow or prevent wind and/or water from changing the shape of the land.
 -Develop and use models to describe patterns of kinds and shapes of landforms and of bodies of water.
 - Use observations to construct explanations that water exists in different forms in natural landscapes, determining the variety of life forms that live in a particular location.

Science - 5th grade

Physical Science – Matter and Its Interaction

-Argue from evidence to support the theory that matter is made of particles too small to be seen.
 - Use simple models to describe that regardless of what reaction or change in properties occur, the total weight of the substances involved does not change.
 -Make observations and measurements to identify given materials based on their properties.
 -Design and conduct investigations on the mixing of two or more different substances to determine whether a new substance with new properties is formed.
 -Generate and compare multiple solutions that meet the desired criteria of improving a property of a material within the constraints of changing the type of substances, the amount of substances used to make the material, and the temperature at which they are mixed

Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions/Energy

-Support an argument that the gravitational force exerted by the Earth on objects near Earth's surface is directed toward the Earth's center.
 -Use models to describe that energy animals use to maintain body warmth, body repair, and for motion was once energy from the sun.

Waves and Their Applications in Technologies for Information Transfer

-Apply scientific knowledge of how lenses bend light to design a tool to enhance vision.
 -Communicate information of how technology has improved over time to increase our ability to see objects and make scientific discoveries about the universe.

Life Science – Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics

-Construct and use models of food webs to describe the transfer of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment and discuss limitations of these models.
 -Formulate questions and predict outcomes about how organisms, such as fungi and bacteria, operate as decomposers to restore (recycle) some materials back to the soil for plants to use in local ecosystems.
 -Use models to test the functioning of a designed process that mitigates a factor upsetting the stability of a local ecosystem.
 -ASK questions about what organisms obtain from the environment and what they release as waste matter back into the environment.

Earth and Space Science

-Interpret provided data about the relative distances of the sun and other stars from Earth to explain the difference in apparent brightness.
 -Use a model of the relative positions and motion of the sun, Earth, and the moon to describe the observed pattern of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the phases of the moon.
 -Identify evidence that supports explanations for how the positions of stars, constellations, and planets in the sky change in consistent patterns as the Earth rotates and orbits the sun along with the other planets.
 -Use models to describe interactions between the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere and identify the

limitations of the models.

-Use evidence from observations to explain the role of the ocean in supporting ecosystems and their organisms, shaping landforms, and influencing climate.

-Develop and revise models to describe how wind and clouds interact with landforms to determine patterns of weather.

-Design and evaluate a solution to an environmental problem that decreases risks, increases benefits, or better meets societal demands for new or improved technologies.

-Construct explanations for how humans and other organisms will be affected if Earth's temperature continues to rise.

F. School Culture and Climate

Every effort will be made by each and every staff member, parent, student, and community member to motivate and encourage each of these affected members to become a part of developing innovative rural thinking. This attitude of motivation and encouragement should be a sensory experience upon entering the school and its environs. One should be able to “feel” the positive climate, as well as to see, hear, touch, and taste it. This will be encouraged from a clear posting of what DIRT Charter School stands for and promotes and modeled by every staff member.

Also clearly posted, in big and small ways, will be the three ways we want all the affected participants “to be”: Be respectful. Be safe. Be a happily engaged learner.

It is the certain knowledge that through the use of these important attributes for motivation, all positive interactions will flow. We all want to know what is expected of us and the consequences of our actions. Toward that end, before the DIRT Charter School is opened, the staff will develop some exemplars in each of the ways “to be” and a three-tiered level of consequences. The consequences will become increasingly restrictive, depending on the frequency or intensity of infractions.

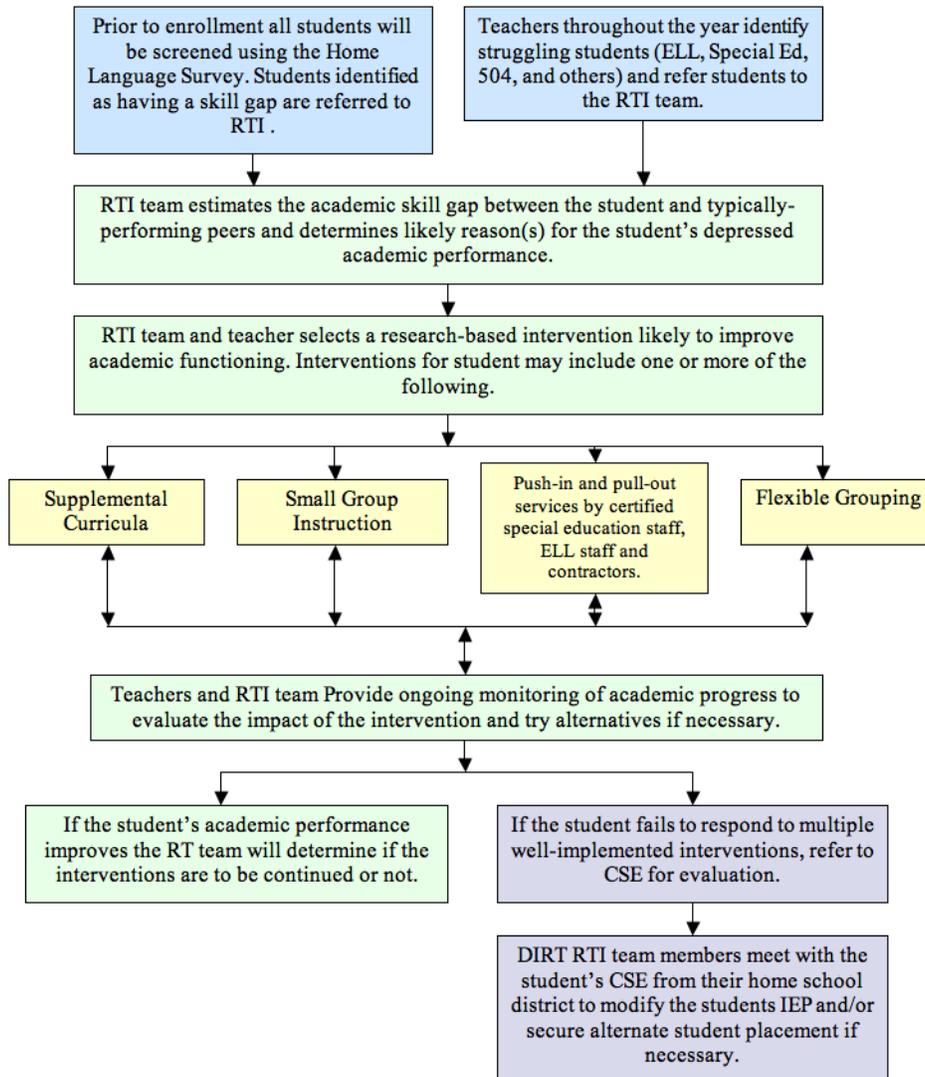
We believe “the punishment should match the crime” and should comply with NY State Education Laws, to include Due Process. Parents should be informed when classroom behavior becomes a distraction to others. Parents must be informed when other adults have to be involved or when removal from the classroom is deemed necessary. Throughout the school year, each learning environment will be expected to convey to students through postings, the three ways “to be” at DIRT.

DIRT Charter School will also look for ways to integrate mindfulness into its school culture and climate. Mindfulness incorporates five basic strategies; development of positive social skills, deliberate attention, focus, self-regulatory strategies, tools created for cultivating well-being and striking emotional balance. These tools provide emotional and cognitive methods to help students manage emotions and behaviors, reduce stress, sharpen concentration, and increase empathy and optimism.

G. Special Student Populations and Related Services

Members of the prospective board for DIRT viewed the Powerpoint presentation and the webinar on Special Education Services available on the NYSED website. One of DIRT's goal is to accelerate the achievement of special needs and ELL students. We will meet the needs of each child through our hands on, project based, approach to teaching, use of the environment as a classroom, and our small class sizes. DIRT has also partnered with Footings Inc., an non-profit provider agency, to provide additional support for special needs students both in school, and outside of school.

DIRT's plan for accelerating the achievement of struggling students is outlined below:



Response to Intervention: Traditionally, schools provide interventions for struggling students only after they test and verify chronic failure. However, students who begin to struggle need intervention immediately. The Principal and grade level teachers will make up the Response to Intervention (RTI) team and will work to immediately identify and make instructional and behavioral decisions to best support Special Education and ELL students. The RTI process at DIRT Charter School will be:

1. Estimate the academic skill gap between the student and typically-performing peers.
2. Determine the likely reason(s) for the student's depressed academic performance.
3. Select a research-based intervention likely to improve academic functioning.
4. Provide ongoing monitoring of academic progress to evaluate the impact of the intervention and try alternatives if necessary.
5. If the student fails to respond to multiple well-implemented interventions, refer to CSE for evaluation.

The RTI team will meet monthly and will monitor not only students who may possibly need academic interventions, but also those students who are ELL, who have IEPs and 504 plans. These discussions will use all available information, including standardized test results, teachers' observations and records, behavior, and parent input. The result will be the creation of an intervention plan. The range of

interventions available at DIRT includes:

- Supplemental curricula
- Small group instruction
- Push-in and pull-out services by certified special education staff and contractors
- Flexible grouping
- Support and services outside the school day provided by Footings Inc.

English Language Learners (ELL): In many of our local school districts, less than 1% of students are considered limited in English proficiency. DIRT's demographics would likely reflect a similar percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) students.

- **ELL Identification:** The school will use the State Education Department's process for identifying students who are English Language Learners. Before the school year begins, students will be screened using the Home Language Survey, which will also be administered to any student enrolling during the school year. If this screening process reveals the home language is other than English or the student's native language is other than English, appropriate school staff will conduct an informal interview. If the student speaks a language other than English and also speaks little or no English, the school will administer the Language Assessment Battery – Revised (LAB-R) to determine eligibility for services.
- **ELL Staffing:** DIRT will hire a part time ELL teacher/coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of our programs for ELL students. They will maintain all records, ensure timely screening to establish initial eligibility for services, and administer annual assessment to determine ongoing eligibility. Once we know our students and can evaluate their needs, the school is prepared to hire additional staff or contract with external service providers.
- **ELL Services:** DIRT will bring ELL students to proficiency in English using a structured immersion model tailored to the needs of each learner. ELL students will be taught the same curriculum as English-speaking students and will be expected to achieve the same high standards. They will have full access to all of the programs and services of the school, while simultaneously receiving the level of support needed to achieve fluency in English. Additionally, ELL students will receive continued literacy support in their native language. We will utilize bilingual education personnel to provide specialized services for ELL students requiring a more intensive level of intervention. The specific nature of the ELL program will vary for each student depending on his or her level of English proficiency and overall academic level. Our daily schedule will allow for both push-in and pull out services, as determined by the teacher, and principal. Spanish, being the most common second language in our area, will be taught as a foreign language at DIRT, further encouraging all our students to be bilingual.
- **ELL Accessibility:** DIRT will ensure that ELL students will not be excluded from the general curriculum or extra-curricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction. ELL students will not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. The school will also make every effort to provide parents with limited English proficiency with notices and information in their native language to encourage participation in the school by all members of the community.
- **ELL Program Evaluation:** School leaders will regularly evaluate the efficiency of our ELL program by analyzing student performance data and reviewing student progress towards English proficiency. Parents will also be surveyed to determine their perspective on services and communication.

Special Education: DIRT will create a safe, welcoming, and respectful school climate that supports equality and access for all learners. We believe that all students can achieve academically. Special

education students will be expected to master the general curriculum and participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities to the maximum extent possible.

- **Special Education Identification:** Our RTI process is designed to identify whether general education techniques and supports are sufficient or if a student might require special education services. We recognize that the school itself cannot make a determination and will work closely with the CSE of the students home school district to provide all necessary information to support its evaluation and IEP development processes. Our staff will also work closely with parents to involve them throughout the entire process. To identify students with a pre-existing IEP, after our enrollment lottery is held in the spring (or if a student enrolls during the school year), school staff will immediately request student records to identify incoming students with disabilities. Staff will obtain and evaluate IEPs to determine whether our school is able to provide the services mandated in the IEP and will work with parents and the CSE to modify IEPs if necessary. In instances where the school cannot provide the placement specified by the IEP and the parent provides consent, the CSE will secure the student placement in a school that provides the required services.
- **Special Education Staffing:** General education teachers will be trained in and expected to use differentiated instructional strategies, materials and assessments within their classroom. Footings Inc. trains numerous Westchester County School districts in methods for teaching special education students, and will be providing training for DIRT teachers. In addition, DIRT Charter School will employ a teacher(s) certified in special education to provide support services for students with IEPs and other at-risk students. In the case of students whose IEPs require the provision of related services not available at the school (such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling), the school will contact the CSE of the school district of residence to arrange for services to be provided by the Department of Education or contract with external providers. DIRT teachers will consult and collaborate with, individual external providers, to create an integrated, developmentally appropriate academic program that will ensure that the social, emotional, and academic needs of special education students are met throughout all learning contexts and environments in the school. When possible, external providers will be included in instructional planning for students.
- **Special Education Services:** We believe that students with disabilities should be taught in the least restrictive environment and that our inclusion model will permit them to receive many of their required services within the general education classroom. Related service providers will be integrated into the school so that the pull-out model is avoided unless specifically required by a student's IEP. Students with disabilities will only be grouped together where necessary to meet their specific academic needs and their IEP goals and requirements. DIRT staff will provide small group instruction, as well as individual pull-out and push-in services for students with designated Resource Room time on their IEPs. To help all our students successfully navigate the transition into a middle school, each graduating student with an IEP or who functions below grade level proficiency will have a transition plan. The transition plan will include current levels of performance in the core content areas, a baseline assessment, and an intervention plan with targeted student learning goals aimed towards meeting grade level proficiency. This will be passed along to the student's next school.
- **Special Education Reviews:** DIRT will conform to all laws and regulations regarding the regular review of IEPs. If the Special Education Coordinator and support staff determine that a student's IEP may no longer be appropriate to the child's needs, they may recommend that the CSE conduct a re-evaluation to adapt the IEP or declassify the student.
- **Special Education Program Evaluation:** The Special Education Teacher, Principal, Teachers and Staff will regularly evaluate the efficacy of our special education program by analyzing

student performance data and reviewing progress toward goals of students with IEPs. Parents will also be surveyed to determine their perspective on the services their child receives.

Managing IEPs and Student Records: DIRT will hire a Special Education Teacher. This teacher will be responsible for maintaining all confidential records, including IEPs, in a secure manner and making them available to staff as appropriate. These records will be stored in locked filing cabinets in an administrative office and an access log will be maintained. At the beginning of the school year IEPs will be provided to teachers along with a summary containing a description of the disability, goals, and required services. The Special Education teacher will meet with each teacher to go over the IEPs, including goals, responsibilities, accommodations and instructional strategies, and to ensure the privacy of all records. General education teachers will also receive ongoing training to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively include students with disabilities in their classrooms. Common planning time will also support collaboration between general and special educators. Teachers of special needs students will be expected to participate in CSE meetings.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL AND FISCAL PLAN
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A. Applicant(s)/Founding Group Capacity

Our founding group possesses a range of experience and skills proven relevant to the founding and start-up of a successful charter school:

Name	Current Employment	Relevant experience/skills and role on founding group	Proposed Role(s)
Kristy Apostolides	Stay at Home Mom	Experience: 12 years experience with organic and sustainable agriculture in policy and practice, 5 years experience in training and curriculum development, developed a training program and manual for individuals in NYC to manage markets for local farmers and trained farmers in the methods of growing organic products for the NYC market, oversaw two European projects which developed online and intensive classroom instruction for organic agriculture and agricultural-focused language development, parent to one pre-school boy Expertise: MSC in Sustainable Agriculture and a BSC in Plant Sciences	Board Member Outreach Team Curriculum Team
Janine Bloom	Stay at Home Mom	Experience: Volunteers for the Pulaski Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary, Girl Scout leader, cheer-leading coach, Tee ball coach, girls softball coach, 4-H Leader, active PTA member, parent of 4 young children Expertise: NYS Certified EMT	Board Member Outreach Team Building Team
Marlene Caraballo	Owner of MP Designs	Experience: Over 20 years of marketing, public relations, graphic design and fundraising experience, freelance design business owner for 12 years, active	Outreach Team Building Team

		community volunteer for Boy Scouts and the Orange County Youth Football League, has held board positions with the Warwick Valley Humane Society; the WVCSD PTA; and the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, parent of three school-aged children Expertise: BS in Industrial Technology	
Kate Eicher	Market Manager, Warwick Valley Farmers' Market	Experience: 5 years of experience teaching in the private school sector in Manhattan after working in the Admissions and Assignment Department of Teach for America, entering her third year as the Market Manager of the well-established Warwick Valley Farmers' Market, where she is a liaison between the community, government, and local farms and businesses, parent of 3 school-age children Expertise: BA in Psychology	Board Member Curriculum Team
Michelle Gluck	Arts Instructor, Wallkill River School Self-Employed Waste Materials/ Recycling Consultant	Experience: 8 years of experience as an environmental educator working to strengthen the relationship of youth and nature in both rural and city environments. Involved in multiple projects to revitalize public spaces through arts and sciences, green infrastructure, and community design/build strategies. Relevant employment experience at a private school. Expertise: BS in Environmental Studies and Urban Design, Certified in DEC Project WET, WILD, and Early Childhood Education	Board Member Curriculum Team Building Team
Jane Hamburger	Retired (2011) Elementary Principal	Experience: Principal of the K - 5 Pine Island Elementary School for 22 years, 28 years as District Coordinator of Staff Development, 22 years as District Coordinator of K-5 Art and Music, 9 years as gifted and talented teacher for elementary students, 8 years teaching elementary classroom and middle-school visual art teaching experiences in six U.S. and Dept. of Defense districts, development and supervised implementation of a math problem-solving approach and a science exploration curriculum that dramatically raised test scores, developed a Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies program at the building level, created a Response to Intervention at 3 tiers of intervention, helped create a District alternative program of choice, grades 1-6, creation and care of five school gardens, supervised two capital improvement projects at the school, building-level supervision of K-6 special education instruction through self-contained environment, as well as inclusion Expertise: School District Administrator NY Certification, Permanent, MA in Elementary Education, BA Art Education	Advisor Curriculum Team Professional Development

Jeanne Lancer	Substitute Teacher, Warwick Valley CSD	Experience: 12 years education experience in both private and public education, full time elementary teaching experience in first and fourth grade, trained in Response to Intervention techniques, Educational Director of a historical museum, parent of 3 school aged children Expertise: MA in Teaching, Certified in Elementary Education	Board Member Curriculum Team Building Team
Christina Pahucki	Art Teacher at Goshen Middle School	Experience: 14 years as an art teacher, trained in Person Centered Planning to create and implement transition plans for teens with special needs, Science Program Coordinator for an overnight camp, parent of three elementary school-aged children Expertise: MA and BA in Art Education Certified in Art Education	Lead Applicant Board Member Curriculum Team Building Team
Tracey Pietrzak	Co-owner of TV Tech Managers Inc.	Experience: Past president of the Pine Island PTA, current secretary of the Warwick Council of PTAs, co-owner of a small television production company, lead an afterschool enrichment program on kids and healthy cooking, member of two Chambers of Commerce, trustee of the Drowned Lands Historical Society, president of the Warwick High School PTA, parent of two school aged children Expertise: BA in Music and Business	Advisor Outreach Team Fundraising Food Services
Paul Ruzskiewicz	Co-owns and farms a 200 acre vegetable farm	Experience: Served on a number of boards including President of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association, the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, and Orange County Farm Bureau, serves on the town of Warwick Planning board as well as the Community Preservation board, served eight years (four as vice chairman, four as chairman) on the national board of The Fraternity of Alpha Zeta, which is the honorary and professional fraternity for men and women in agriculture, parent of 2 school aged children Expertise: MA in Farm Management and Production Economics	Board Member Outreach Team Building Team
Noel Thompson	President of Thompson Imports	Experience: President and owner of Thompson Imports for over 6 years, alumni president for Aiglon College in Switzerland, general management experience for several companies, non-profit board experience, on founding board of the All Saints Episcopal Day School in Hoboken Expertise: AB in German	Advisor Fundraising

Proposal Development: DIRT Charter School was initially conceived by a group of Warwick parents and educators. Through a series of meetings we identified key elements of the school, explored potential locations and wrote the application.

Our core group grew with our community outreach, and we divided ourselves into teams including

Curriculum, Community Outreach, Fundraising, Food Services, and Buildings and Grounds to more efficiently research and develop a plan for DIRT. The smaller teams met and corresponded via phone and e-mail as needed to further develop parts of the school plan.

Some applicants visited various charter schools, traveling as far as Philadelphia, to see how charter schools look in action. DIRT applicants visited two schools, Green Woods Charter School and Seven Generations Charter School, that use the Environment as Integrating Context (EIC) as the foundation for their curriculum. Our group was extremely impressed with the hands on activities the students were involved in, and the two school’s high academic achievement. Founders for the Seven Generations Charter School gave DIRT applicants the tour, and gave wonderful advice on starting a charter school.

The primary authors of the application are Christina Pahucki, Jane Hamburger, Jeanne Lancer, Michelle Gluck, Kate Eicher and Kristy Apostolides although many other team members also contributed. The application and letter of intent, both written online as Google Docs, allowed multiple people to write, revise and comment simultaneously via the Internet, enabling multiple people to use their electronic devices to see and edit the documents live. Between meetings applicants would also make edits to the Google Doc application choosing a color for their font. Later at the meetings, the color coded edits would be discussed and changed to black when agreed upon. Many DIRT team members are busy parents, and this use of technology enabled efficient collaboration on all parts of the application process.

B. Board of Trustees and Governance

Trustee Name	Voting	Position	Length of Initial Term
Kristy Apostolides	Y	Member	3
Janine Bloom	Y	Member	3
Kate Eicher	Y	Member	3
Michelle Gluck	Y	Member	2
Jeanne Lancer	Y	Member	2
Christina Pahucki	Y	Member	1
Paul Ruszkiewicz	Y	Member	2
PTA President	Y	Member	1

Experience: The capacity of our founding board is demonstrated by 1) extensive and relevant professional experience, 2) community connections and 3) solid plans and procedures for governing the school. More information on the relevant experience of each proposed Board of Trustees member can be found in the table starting on page 40, and in the resumes in Attachment 5a.

Community Connections: All of DIRT’s proposed members live, work and play in Orange County and are deeply committed to promoting growth and opportunity for our community.

Both Paul Ruszkiewicz and Christina Pahucki grew up on farms in Orange County and came back from college to work in Orange County. Paul runs a 200 acre vegetable farm with his father and has taken many leadership roles in the community from sitting on the planning board to being president of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association.

Many of our prospective board members are active with our children’s schools. Paul Ruszkiewicz, Christina Pahucki, Jeanne Lancer, and Kate Eicher often attend public school board meetings and speak out to protect student programs. Paul is a constant advocate for the districts Agriculture Program.

DIRT’s prospective board has experience volunteering in the community and serving on non-profit

boards. Janine Bloom volunteers for most activities in which her four children are involved, including Girl Scouts, 4-H, cheerleading, tee ball, and softball. She is also an active PTA and Ladies Auxilliary Member. Paul Ruskiewicz has served as President of the Orange County Vegetable Growers Association, the New York State Vegetable Growers Association, and Orange County Farm Bureau. Paul currently serves on the town of Warwick Planning board as well as the Community Preservation board.

Governance Practices and Procedures: Our founding Board understands the responsibility of governing a charter school. The board will have a performance contract with the Board of Regents that provides the school with the autonomy to design and operate its programs in exchange for accountability for results, namely academic performance, organizational viability and fiscal soundness.

The Board's roles and responsibilities include:

- Establishing the school's mission and school design
- Ensuring adequate resources for implementation of the school program
- Recruiting, hiring and evaluating the Principal
- Approving major policies and regularly reviewing and revising them as necessary
- Preparing for and attending board and committee meetings
- Making informed decisions to support the success of the school
- Monitoring program implementation and compliance with the charter agreement and relevant laws and regulations
- Facilitating long term strategic planning
- Recruiting and orienting new board members and assessing board performance
- Participating as appropriate in the grievance process
- Enhancing the school's public standing

The qualifications to serve on the DIRT Board of Trustees will include:

- Belief in and support of the mission and design of the school
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be able to read and write English
- Be a U.S. citizen
- Willingness to attend board and committee meetings and volunteer for board work
- NOT be an employee of the charter school
- NOT hold office if a member of his/her household is an employee of the charter school
- NOT hold office if a member of his/her family is a member of the Board
- NOT simultaneously hold another incompatible office (e.g., town supervisor)
- NOT have been removed from a school district office within one year of election

As noted in our by-laws, the board will have at least five members. Board members will initially serve one, two or three year terms in order to stagger Board member turnover. After the initial term, as previously stated in the "Proposed Founding Board of Trustees" chart, Board members will all serve three year terms, and will then be up for re-election.

The Board will meet monthly at the school. The Board will include the following officer positions: President, Secretary and Treasurer. The agenda will be developed by the President in consultation with the Principal and will include a written or oral report by the Principal, a financial report and opportunity for public comments. The Secretary will be responsible for sending the agenda to each board member at least seven days in advance of the meeting, with all relevant materials. Each meeting will start with a public comment period. All meetings will be open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Law, and the Board will only go into executive session for reasons set out in the Open Meetings law after passing a resolution detailing these reasons. Minutes will be taken at all board and committee meetings, copies of which will be posted on our website within two weeks of the meeting's date, and archived in the school

office. Meetings will be publicized as follows:

- The Board will establish an annual meeting calendar with the time and place of each meeting.
- The calendar will be posted on the school's website.
- A notice of each meeting will be posted prominently at the school, on the school website, and in the local press as required by the Open Meetings Law.

The board will operate as a whole and may appoint sub-committees as needed to carry out the work of the board. Committees will have a job description that clearly describes any delegation of authority by the full Board and a committee chair appointed by the Board Chair. The Board will delegate authority for the day-to-day operations of the school to the Principal, who will oversee all operations of the school and report directly to the Board. The Board will establish measurable annual performance goals, conduct end-of-year evaluations of the Principal, and ultimately hold him or her accountable for effectively running the school. The Principal will present at each board meeting, on enrollment, attendance, financial, compliance and student performance data.

Parent and Staff Involvement: The Board will encourage parent and staff input regarding the governance of the school. Board meetings will adhere to the Open Meeting Law and include an opportunity for public comment, and surveys of parents and staff will be used as part of school oversight and the Principal's evaluation. The Board will enact and publicize a complaint policy that contains a clear process for bringing issues to the attention of the board and for the Board to respond in a timely fashion. Board members will also regularly visit the school and attend school community events and actively solicit feedback from parents.

In addition, the Board will reserve a seat for a parent (or guardian) representative. The parent Board member will normally be the elected President of the Parent Teacher Association unless the President does not wish to serve in which case the Board will nominate a parent candidate. The parent Board member will have the right to vote but will cease to be a Board member if his or her child ceases to be a student at the school or his or her term of office ends.

The Board will require the principal to inform the school staff, about matters discussed by the Board that are related to their professional responsibilities. The principal will also solicit staff feedback and communicate that to the Board on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Board will occasionally request presentations from members of the school staff on specific aspects of the school's program.

The Board may solicit additional parents or teachers to participate in specific committees. The Board can establish committees to address distinct issues that come to the attention of the Board and require the advice and research of multiple constituents: teachers, parents, staff and sometimes, students. Input from students' families and all school staff is essential to the continuous improvement of the school and the Board's ability to assess and support DIRT's mission.

Board Recruitment: As needed, the Board will recruit and vote on the appointment of new members who demonstrate adequate qualifications and commitment. All new Board members will receive orientation materials, including a copy of the charter, Board member job description and committee descriptions, previous meeting minutes and major policies. The Board will undertake ongoing governance training to ensure all members have a common vision of the Board's roles and responsibilities and best practices.

C. Management and Staffing

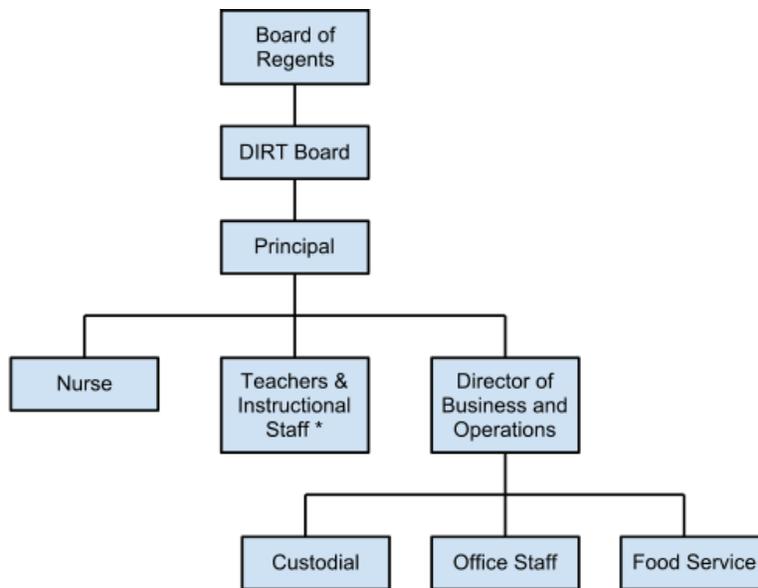
Principal: The chief executive officer for DIRT will be responsible for the effective operation of the school and keeping the Board informed of the condition of the School's educational, organizational and fiscal operations. This position requires a minimum of a master's degree in education and at least five years of administrative experience or its equivalent in a school. For more detailed information on the

responsibilities and qualification requirements for the principal see Attachment 8a.

Director of Business and Operations: The Director of Business and Operations will oversee all day-to-day operational activities of the school in collaboration with Principal. This position requires a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, experience in accounting, and at least five years of administrative or management experience, preferably in a school. For more detailed information on the responsibilities and qualification requirements for the Director of Business and Operations see Attachment 8a.

Organizational Chart: Our organizational chart reflects the needs of a small school. The Board of Trustees hires the Principal, who reports directly to the board and is responsible for day-to-day management of the school. The Principal is the primary instructional leader of the school and will supervise and evaluate teachers. The Director of Business and Operations will supervise the office staff, custodial and food service staff allowing the Principal to focus the bulk of their time on supporting instruction.

Responsibilities and qualifications for teachers are provided in Attachment 8a. We have not identified a school leader, but intend to initiate a search as soon as the charter is approved. Key qualifications include high expectations for learning and behavior, demonstrated success in raising student achievement, experience with start-up environments, and skills managing staff in a complex organization.



*This includes the Head Teacher, Special Education Coordinator and ELL Coordinator

Staffing Plan: We believe the following staffing structure is aligned with DIRT’s mission, budget, enrollment, and school schedule. It takes into account the needs of the school from an enrollment and pedagogical perspective and ensures that teachers, students, and administration receive the organizational support they need to succeed.

Staffing Plan

Title(s)	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Salary Range
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	\$70,000 - \$100,000
Director of Business & Operations	1	1	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000

K-5 Classroom Teachers	12	12	12	12	12	\$40,000 - \$60,000
6-8 ELA Teachers	0.7	1.2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
6-8 Math Teacher	0.3	0.7	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000
6-8 Science Teachers	0.7	1.2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
6-8 Social Studies Teacher	0.3	0.7	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Special Education/ AIS Teacher	1	1.5	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Health/PE Teacher	1.5	2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Art Teacher	1.5	2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Music Teacher	1.5	2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Spanish/ELL Teacher	1.5	2	2	2	2	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Nurse/Attendance	1	1	1	1	1	\$40,000 - \$60,000
Custodians	2	3	3	3	3	\$30,000 - \$40,000
Food Service Staff	2	3	3	3	3	\$10,000 - \$15,000
Office Staff	2	2	2	2	2	\$20,000 - \$30,000
Aides/Lunch & Recess Monitors	3	4	4	4	4	\$10,000 - \$15,000

Teacher and Support Staff Recruitment: The members of the Board along with the Principal will work diligently to attract and retain experienced and skilled teachers. To recruit qualified and experienced teachers DIRT will:

- Advertise in the local papers
- Advertise online on DIRT’s website and potentially on other job search websites
- Advertise directly through universities
- Participate in local education job fairs

While many of these recruitment resources are free, DIRT has budgeted \$1,000 per year for incidental advertising expenses for the purposes of recruiting teachers and staff. Throughout our planning, the founding group has met and been contacted by many talented and experienced educators who have expressed an eagerness at the prospect of working at DIRT Charter School. In addition, the following organizations provide job postings, fairs, and potential hiring resources for us: Green Charter School Network, NYCSI, and the Charter Center. The process for applying for a position at DIRT is outlined in Attachment 8a.

Hiring and Personnel Policies and Procedures: We have budgeted \$40,000 - \$60,000 per general classroom teacher depending on experience. A mentor program will be established to allow veteran teachers with experience in the DIRT philosophy to support less-experienced teaching staff. The mentor teachers will be compensated at DIRT’s higher range pay scale. A suggested pay scale based on education level and professional experience is included in attachment 8a. We have budgeted the same per special education teacher and special areas teachers. This is about average in our area for teaching salaries at a public school. We will offer a competitive compensation package including benefits in order to attract a solid core of experience. We may explore three-year contracts or bonus structure as funds become available, in order to encourage staff to stay and ensure low turnover. The Principal will determine the actual salary of teachers and staff based on prior experience, performance and responsibilities. The Board will determine the salary for the Principal. We hope to raise salaries as the school gains financial efficiency in later years with full student enrollment. Any change to a staff member’s salary will be approved by the Principal in writing, and approved by the Board.

We will provide a supportive, professional environment where staff will develop strong

relationships with each other, as well as with students and families, and will see their efforts rewarded through student learning. We believe that we will have success developing and retaining high-quality staff members by creating a culture and schedule that support teachers' planning, collaboration, and professional growth. We seek elementary state-certified educators with a demonstrated record of success teaching elementary school aged students.

General qualifications for all staff include: strong academic preparation, a high degree of competence, intellectual rigor, emotional maturity, enthusiastic and professional attitude, knowledge of job-related practices, and the ability to further the goals of DIRT Charter School. Successful candidates will understand and be committed to the mission, goals, philosophy, and activities of DIRT, as described in the school's charter. Special attention will be paid to the candidate's academic records and previous relevant experience. Prospective job candidates must demonstrate that they are willing and able to provide the support that a diverse student population requires. They must demonstrate their instructional prowess through a model lesson and must have strong references in all aspects of teaching, but particularly in areas of: differentiation of instruction, teacher collaboration, innovation, flexibility, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Teacher Evaluation: Our teacher evaluations will take into account not only student results on standardized tests, but also other measures of student outcomes, such as authentic product assessments, formative and summative assessments and portfolios, in addition to Principal evaluations. The Principal will have primary responsibility for evaluating teachers. The Principal will conduct a formal annual evaluation of each teacher; however, informal evaluations will take place on an ongoing, consistent basis. Formal evaluations for faculty will include specific criteria and a narrative summary. These will be in letter form, written by the Principal based on year-to-date observations, and objective student assessment data. The focus of the evaluation letter will be on exceptional strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers will also be asked to submit a self-evaluation.

Faculty will receive targeted support from the Principal around the areas they cited for improvement, including professional development, coaching and mentoring by appropriate staff, as well as outside consultants. The Principal will prepare a written report to discuss with the teacher in a formal evaluation conference, and, will determine if the teacher's at-will contract will be renewed and salaries increased.

Non-Certified Instructional Personnel: The school reserves the option to employ non-certified teachers so long as they comport to the following: are exactly the kind of individual(s) we seek that are committed to doing what it takes to improve student academic performance; fulfill at least one of the four criteria stipulated in Education Law § 2854(3)(a-I); that the total number of such teachers is equal to but not more than 30 percent of the teaching staff, or five teachers, whichever is less; and qualify as subject-based competent pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all teachers providing instruction to students with disabilities (as identified by a Committee on Special Education) will be New York State certified in special education.

Employer-employee relationship: DIRT strives to be a dynamic learning organization where individual and organizational growth occurs at all levels of the school. We believe in the importance of involving staff members in the decision-making processes at DIRT, particularly during the start-up phase. The Principal will seek teacher input regarding school curriculum, culture, and policy. We have built time into the schedule for the core teachers and administration to meet as a group once a week, not just for professional development, but also to discuss the school's progress and needs.

C.1. Charter Management Organization

We do not intend to contract with a charter management organization.

C.2. Partner Organization

DIRT does not have a partner organization.

D. Evaluation

Programmatic Audits: Programmatic audits will focus on the quality of implementation and results. Implementation of curriculum programs, interventions and assessments will be monitored by the Principal, through planning meetings and direct observation. Analysis of student performance data will be the primary method for evaluating efficacy. We will analyze data and look for trends in sub-groups. DIRT will submit an Annual Report to the NYSED detailing its performance and progress towards its accountability goals. We expect to have regular oversight visits by the NYSED and will use any constructive feedback to make necessary changes to the academic program. A sample programmatic evaluation chart is below:

Metric and Target	Target	Current
% Scoring Level 3 or 4 in ELA	> 75%	
% Scoring Level 3 or 4 in Math	> 75%	
% Scoring Level 3 or 4 in Science	> 75%	
% Increase on Scoring Level 4 in ELA, Math and Science	> 5%	
Ranking Charter School in NYS	Top 10%	
“In Good Standing” under NCLB	Y or N	
Average Daily Attendance %	> 95%	
Annual Enrollment Rate %	> 90%	

Principal Evaluation: The board will conduct an annual evaluation of the Principal focused heavily on academic achievement and financial stability, which will be used to determine the Principal’s raise in salary. At the beginning of the year the board and Principal will establish measurable process and outcome goals for the year. At the end of the year, a written review will be provided to the Principal and used to determine eligibility for a raise. The evaluator will seek input from the Principal, teachers and staff, families and students, and the board. Data sources will include assessment results, enrollment and attendance, parent satisfaction surveys, grievance records, and budget information and audit results.

Teacher Evaluation: Please see the section below on Professional Development and the Personnel Policies in Attachment 8a.

Board Evaluation: The board will develop a self-evaluation instrument and use it annually to check Board performance. Domains will include member attendance and participation, communication with stakeholders, regular review and revision of key policies and procedures, financial oversight, evaluation of school leadership, handling of grievances, and adherence to the mission of the school. The board will use the results of these evaluations to inform the development of strategic goals and action plans. The board will also monitor its composition to maintain adequate skill sets to govern the school, as well as, diversify to ensure a variety of perspectives.

Family and Student Satisfaction: DIRT will gauge family and student satisfaction both directly and indirectly. We will semi-annually administer surveys to assess family satisfaction in areas such as instruction, school culture, and communication. Survey questions would ask parents to rate the following questions as 4: Strongly agree, 3: Agree, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly Disagree:

1. I am satisfied with the quality of instruction my child receives.
2. My child is challenged to do his/her best.
3. I am satisfied with my child's experience with technology at DIRT.
4. DIRT fosters a safe environment.
5. School discipline at DIRT is handled in a fair manner.
6. My child feels comfortable talking to and interacting with his/her teachers.
7. I feel comfortable contacting administration for problems that require attention.
8. Teachers are available when I need to speak with them.
9. I receive information about school policies, assessments, and school activities.
10. Information is periodically provided to me about how my child is doing at DIRT.

We will also infer satisfaction based on our enrollment numbers and retention of students from year to year. We believe our attention to parents through regular communication will keep them engaged in the life of the school and in their children's academic progress.

E. Professional Development

At DIRT we believe that the professional development of our teachers does not just occur at workshops and seminars but in fact should be a daily part of the life of our school. As such our professional development program for our teachers will include the following:

- **After-school:** Teachers will have professional development after student dismissal.
- **Daily planning period:** While students are at Special Area classes, Spanish or PE teachers will have a common planning time with the other teacher of that same grade level, providing continuous improvement, collaboration and professional development.
- **Weekly meetings:** At least once per school week, teachers in like disciplines will have the opportunity to share information and research on new and updated topics in their specialty area.
- **Mentor teachers:** There will be regular meetings set between the mentor teachers and their assigned mentee based upon need.
- **Participation in professional organizations:** Each of our teachers will be encouraged to maintain membership in their appropriate professional organization. Participation in national activities such as national conferences will be subject to availability of school funding.
- **Summer and weekend training:** Professional development will also be scheduled as needed over the summer, on weekends, and on school holidays. Prior to the opening year of DIRT charter school all teachers will be expected to attend a SEER training institute.
- **Unobstructive scheduling:** The primary goal of Professional Development is to improve teaching and therefore will be scheduled as to not disrupt the school day by pulling teachers from their classrooms.

Training: Staff development will be designed and coordinated by the Principal and will include the use of training consultants from the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). In the summer before DIRT's first year, SEER professional developers will train DIRT's teachers to implement the Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC)[™] Model. Since 1998, SEER has provided over 200 EIC Model[™] Implementation Institutes for state education agencies, school districts, and charter schools in 19 states. SEER designed its EIC Model[™] Implementation Institutes specifically for teams of teachers and administrators of grade levels K-12. The institutes provide educational teams with minds-on, collaborative activities that are the tools for developing and implementing an EIC Model[™] program in their schools. SEER's professional development specialists train teachers and administrators in EIC Model[™] practices in four-day institutes. Each interactive institute help teams learn to:

- Integrate instruction and learning using SEER's curriculum-mapping process;
- Provide hands-on learning experiences through problem-solving and issue-based studies;

- Work successfully in interdisciplinary team structures;
- Develop learner-centered, constructivist approaches adapted to individual students; and,
- Identify community and natural settings that can be used as contexts for EIC Model™-based instruction.

Evaluation and Review: Professional development is most effective if school teams continue to receive support following implementation. SEER’s evaluators will visit DIRT multiple times and have ongoing communication during the initial years of implementing the EIC Model™. SEER’s evaluators work with DIRT to construct a program evaluation plan. This evaluation process typically involves collecting and analyzing measures of student achievement and behavior. SEER’s EIC Model™ evaluation approach includes three key components:

- **Self-evaluation Rubric:** The rubrics are organized around the educational components of DIRT’s program as well as considering leadership and community involvement processes.
- **Stages of Concern:** The Stages of Concern is used to measure how staff feel about the innovation that they are expected to implement.
- **Innovation Configuration:** The Innovation Configuration is a diagnostic methodology created to look at the way teachers actually implement innovations in educational practice.

The Principal and staff will review the evaluation and adjust accordingly.

Leadership: Throughout the school year, the Principal will spend time daily observing and supporting teachers in their classrooms in order to evaluate practice and provide feedback and support. The Principal will model and observe lessons to support teachers in meeting the needs of all the students in their classrooms. In follow-up discussions, the Principal will share their observations with the teacher as well as results of student assessments with the goal being the improvement of instruction and student learning. Additional professional development for individuals or groups times may be scheduled as needed as long as it does not interfere with instructional time.

Once a week, faculty and staff will meet with the Principal, after school hours. These meetings will be devoted to planning lessons and activities, reviewing data, identifying struggling students and making adjustments to instruction. Teachers will share effective teaching practices and collaborate. Grade level teacher teams will also have common planning time to integrate and coordinate instructional units, plan learning projects, and review student data.

DIRT will also conduct trainings explaining the referral process for special education, RTI, IEP development and implementation, evaluation and reporting of the student’s progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives, confidentiality of student records, and structured English language immersion.

Professional development will be differentiated based on assessment of staff needs. New staff will be oriented to the school’s program and practices and may be required to attend an EIC Implementation Institute. Veteran staff will receive refresher or more advanced trainings. Faculty may request funds for external training that is aligned with the school program and can be turn-keyed for the benefit of others.

Mentoring: As part of their job description, veteran teachers will be responsible for mentoring new teachers. They will be expected to include new teachers in planning activities and define clear roles in the classroom. They will support the new teachers and will provide school leaders with feedback regarding their progress, but will not formally evaluate them.

Teacher Evaluation and Review: We do not believe evaluation should be based on just one or two formal classroom visits; rather it should encompass cumulative evidence collected over the course of the school year from observation of classroom practice and professional responsibilities, student performance

data, self-reflection and peer and parent input. Teachers will collect evidence throughout the year and bring that portfolio of evidence to a end-of-year conference with the principal to evaluate progress. Teachers with serious performance deficits will be placed on an improvement plan that includes specific objectives, strategies and deadlines for improvement. The end-of-year conference will inform bonuses and decisions about placement the following year.

F. Facilities

The DIRT Charter School Building and Grounds Team is currently exploring many location options. At minimum our school would need 20,400 square feet of space that could hold 15 classrooms in year one, 18 classrooms in year two and 20 classrooms in year three. Four or more smaller office spaces would also be needed. Preference is being given to those locations that have 26 or more classroom spaces (for special areas classes) and include land sufficient for outdoor activities. Since our school is contracting out for food services, there is no need for a formal kitchen. No residential facilities will be provided by DIRT Charter School. Our applicant team will ensure that our school site will be accessible for students and adults with disabilities. See the chart below for more detail on the space needed for DIRT:

Subject/Position	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yrs 3-5	Notes
Principal	1	1	1	1 small office
Director of B&O	1	1	1	1 small office
Main Office	1	1	1	1 medium office (2 staff)
K - 3rd Classrooms	8	8	8	15 students each
4th - 5th Classrooms	4	4	4	22 students each
6th Grade	2	2	2	22 students each, Yr 1 kids stay in room, teachers rotate
7th Grade	0	2	2	22 students each, Yr 2 create 2 6-8 Science rooms, rotate student for science
8th Grade	0	0	2	22 students each, Yr 3 all 6-8 teachers get own rooms, kids fully rotate
Special Ed/AIS	1	2	2	15 students max
Health/PE	0	0	0	Hope to have a gym and/or large outdoor space and possibly an office
Art	0 - 2	0 - 2	0 - 2	Could do Art on a cart if we had to
Music	0 - 2	0 - 2	0 - 2	Could do Music on a cart if we had to
Spanish	0 - 2	0 - 2	0 - 2	Could do Spanish on a cart if we had to
Nurse	1	1	1	1 medium office
Lunch	1	1	1	Need one room with fridges and warming towers
Total General Classrooms	15	18	20	
Total Special Classrooms	0 - 6	0 - 6	0 - 6	
Total Offices	4	4	4	+ room for food storage

In this area prices per square foot can range from \$4 to \$20. We have budgeted for 60 square feet per student at \$20 per square foot. This brings our budgeted amount for rent to \$302,400 for year one, \$355,200 for year two, and \$408,000 for years three through five.

Pending our charter's approval the Buildings and Grounds team will further discuss our options and take steps to secure a location. We may find additional suitable locations as we progress throughout the charter approval process. DIRT plans to secure a location after approval and to take occupancy of a location by July 1, 2014 at the latest.

The DIRT Buildings and Grounds Team has identified an existing empty school building located at 900 Kings Highway, Warwick, NY to house DIRT. The school building is 41,196 square feet and includes three floors and a basement. The importance of this location is that it is part of the former Mid-Orange Correctional Facility, an extensive property consisting of approximately 40 acres within a secured perimeter, and 686 acres outside the secured perimeter. Before the site was a correctional facility it was a boys' school and so it has many features ideal for a school setting. The site has access to various natural habitats such as Wickham Lake, fields, wooded forest, and wetlands. There are ball fields and plenty of space for outdoor recreational activities. The facility around the school building is made up of 81 buildings. DIRT may also inquire about renting additional buildings such as a physical education building and/or the greenhouse.

The Town of Warwick is in the process of purchasing this property from New York State. The Town of Warwick expects to have control of the property this Spring. Warwick is looking for potential renters for the 81 buildings. DIRT has written a letter to the Town Supervisor, Michael Sweeton, requesting for the town to consider renting us a portion of the property. He has said that once the town obtains full control of the property he'd be happy to meet with DIRT and arrange a tour. DIRT would work with a contractor to renovate the building(s) based on our needs.

If the former correctional facility does not become available, there are other location possibilities within the Warwick Valley School District.

G. Insurance

Based on the insurance policies obtained by other similar charter schools, here is the approximate coverage we expect to secure:

- General Aggregate: \$2 million aggregate and \$1 million for each occurrence
- Umbrella Liability: \$5 million limit of coverage
- School Leaders Errors & Omissions: \$1 million in coverage
- Student Accident: \$500,000 aggregate per accident
- Student Accident Medical: \$25,000 per accident
- Student Catastrophic Accident: \$1 million limit
- Auto: for non-owned vehicles used in school business
- Property: \$250,000 in coverage for school furnishings, equipment, and leased space
- Workers' Compensation: rate determined by state of New York

DIRT's prospective Board has already begun reaching out to area insurance agencies that can meet our needs.

H. Health, Food, and Transportation Services

Health Services: Members of the prospective board for DIRT viewed the Powerpoint presentation and the webinar on School Health and School Safety available on the NYSED website. DIRT Charter School will work with the Department of Education and the Department of Health to provide a nurse to maintain students' records and supervise the disbursement of medication and the treatment of students who are ill or injured. The nurse will be responsible for all record keeping and correspondence related to these responsibilities. Our school will have a full time nurse in it's first year of operation. At least two staff members will be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment. Vision and hearing screenings will be coordinated with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Health Records: Cumulative health records will be stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only by authorized staff members. These records will include proof of immunization and authorization for administration of medication. All visits to the nurse, including reason and treatment, will be documented in

each child's file. Parents will be expected to provide at least three emergency contacts in the event their child becomes ill or is injured. In the event of an injury or illness parents or guardians will be contacted. If no one can be reached, the emergency contacts for that child will be utilized.

Immunizations: The school will ensure that all new students adhere to New York State requirements for immunization before they attend. Parents or guardians must provide documentation that their child has received all required doses of vaccines or at least one dose of each of the required vaccines and is waiting to receive the subsequent doses at the appropriate time intervals. Required immunizations include: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP, DTP, Tdap: 3 doses); Polio (IPV, OPV: 3 doses; Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR: 2 doses of measles containing vaccine and 1 dose each of mumps and rubella); Hepatitis B (3 doses); Varicella (1 dose). Parents or guardians may waive immunization in accordance with Public Health Law and exemptions to immunizations shall be granted if a licensed physician or nurse practitioner certifies such immunization may be detrimental to the student's health, or if the student's parent or guardian holds genuine and sincere beliefs contrary to such immunizations.

Medications: The school will implement strict policies and procedures regarding the safe and secure administration of medication, which will be communicated clearly to parents and staff. The school will only administer medication that is necessary to maintain students in school and which must be given during school hours. Prescribed medication that requires administration through a subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous or rectal route; or prescribed medications being administered through pumps, tubes or nebulizers; or oral, topical or inhalant medication needed by non-self-directed students will be given only by the nurse or licensed practical nurses under the direction of the nurse. The nurse may designate other staff to assist self-directed students taking their own oral, topical, and inhalant medication and will provide the training and supervision necessary to perform these tasks in a safe and effective manner.

DIRT Charter School will require in writing both orders from a licensed prescriber and permission from parents/guardians to administer medication. All medications, including nonprescription over the counter drugs, must be prescribed by a licensed prescriber on an individual basis. Written orders for prescription and nonprescription over the counter medications shall include: student's name and date of birth; name of medication; dosage and route of administration; frequency and time of administration; conditions under which medication should be administered; date written, prescriber's name, title, and signature; and prescriber's phone number. The school may request additional information, such as self-administration orders or potential adverse reactions. Medication orders must be renewed annually or when there is a change in medication or dosage.

Prescription medication must be delivered to the school in the original container with an appropriate label including student name; name and phone number of pharmacy; licensed prescriber's name; date and number of refills; name of medication/dosage; frequency of administration; and route of administration. Similarly, OTC medication and drug samples must be in the original manufacturer's container/package. Medications will not be transported daily to and from school; parents will be expected to provide an adequate supply to remain at the school, which will provide locked storage, including refrigeration if required, within a secure health office. If students chronically fail to come for medications, the school nurse will contact the parent to address the problem. The licensed prescriber will be also informed so that the medication protocol can be reviewed and possible adjustments made, e.g., home administration, extended release medication. Students may carry and self-administer prescribed medication under circumstances meeting the following conditions: demonstrated need, particularly as it relates to asthma or allergies; written prescriber's orders and request by parents/guardians; and student receives effective instruction and demonstrates adequate level of responsibility.

Food Services: Learning from and appreciating our environment will be a way of life at DIRT Charter

School, leading the way with our food service program. Meal time is an excellent opportunity to further Develop Innovative Rural Thinking, to further educate the entire child, and to teach lifelong, healthy, eating habits. We will not participate in the local school district's food service program as it does not meet our criteria. We will serve children foods that are of higher nutritional value and less processed including fresh, seasonal, local fruits and vegetables. We will support our farmers and whenever possible we will incorporate foods grown by the children as part of their academic studies.

This is something we plan to ultimately manage in-house, but until then we intend to enlist the services of Red Rabbit, based in New York City, to provide students with a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack. Red Rabbit already works with over 70 public, charter and independent schools and camps in the greater New York area, developing specific (made from scratch) meals to fit the requirements of each individual school. For our school, Red Rabbit has agreed to incorporate food grown by students.

We are thrilled to enter into a partnership with them, helping them to source even more produce from the Hudson Valley, as they provide our children with fresh, delicious meals, prepared to our highest of standards. The food will be prepared in their NYC kitchens and will be transported to the school in large trays that we will re-heat and serve to the children and the teachers, family style. Each day, a small group of children on a rotating basis, will be involved in this process. Red Rabbit is able to tailor the program accordingly at a savings for DIRT if our chosen facility has vast kitchen resources.

DIRT Charter School will participate in the Federal school breakfast and lunch programs and will also provide students with snack. Research shows healthy food choices, longer meal time, and recess preceding the meal, yields less absenteeism, greater concentration, and improved behavior over children eating less healthy meals or skipping meals. Our food service program will provide the children with the foundation they need to achieve academic and personal success. The food service program will be funded by the students' families. Reduced and free meals will be provided to eligible students.

Transportation Services: DIRT will not provide transportation services directly, but will partner, as all area private schools do, with the local school districts. DIRT will work with the local districts to ensure that transportation is provided for any students with disabilities in compliance with all local and federal laws. Because we intend to provide numerous off campus trips, the school may contract with a private bus company to provide supplemental transportation. If our budget allows, we will purchase a vehicle(s) for field trip purposes. The families of students outside of the 15 mile radius of the school's location will be responsible for providing their own transportation to DIRT. DIRT staff will assist parents of students outside the transportation radius in connecting them with other parents who may be from the same area for the purposes of carpooling.

The Director of Business and Operations will be responsible for coordinating transportation, including submission of required eligibility forms and identification of bus routes and stops. The Director of Business and Operations will contact eligible students' families to inform them of their child's bus number, bus stop, and estimated pick-up and drop-off time. We also intend to hold students accountable for their behavior on their way to and from school. Our code of conduct will address appropriate transportation behavior and staff will review bus safety rules and conduct bus drills.

I. Family and Community Involvement

Family Involvement: We believe strongly that parents are the first educators of their children and that parents have the primary moral responsibility of educating their children to adulthood. Families will be encouraged to actively participate in a variety of school functions and to volunteer at the school. Parents/guardians will have regular access to their child's teachers to ask questions and provide feedback, and will receive regular reports from teachers via phone calls, e-mail and letters home.

DIRT Charter School will support an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) providing space to meet, access to communication tools, and scheduling/academic information that parents need to organize

successful activities. School leadership will make every effort to attend PTA meetings and events, and will have an open door policy for its officers in order to hear their concerns.

Board meetings will be open and include a public comment period to further encourage familial involvement. Scholastic materials will be available in English and Spanish, and we will have Spanish speaking staff to ensure effective communication with all students and their families.

Community Involvement: DIRT has already started the process of engaging in an ongoing dialogue with parents, community members, and organizations from all over Orange County. Our public outreach campaign has generated a range of letters of support, from organizations such as the Hamptonburgh Grange, The Wallkill River School, The Pine Island Chamber of Commerce, The Orange County Farm Bureau, the Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association, the Orange Arts Council and Footings Inc. (see Attachment 2). These organizations will provide excellent opportunities for our students in participating in community service.

The environmental focus of our school offers an opportunity for community involvement. DIRT Charter School will take a leadership role in sustainability, our community involvement opportunities will include: building a garden, composting, and offering recycling for batteries or other materials. We will continue to reach out to additional community groups and cultivate opportunities to establish symbiotic relationships where our students can support their work, while learning valuable professional and life skills.

In addition, we will involve parents and the community in the planning, implementation and design of the school. There will be visiting parent groups, informal focus groups, surveys, discussions, and community events. Parents will be invited to join our Founding Team and our Outreach Team (serving as DIRT ambassadors) will continue to solicit feedback on what kind of school parents and the community want and need. We will have a parent representative designated on the DIRT Board.

Similar to the idea of Professional Development, DIRT will be active in facilitating Community Development. Using sources such as NYSED's EngageNY, NY State Parenting Education Partnership, and other more local resources such as BOCES, YMCA, and community centers and organizations, DIRT will invite the community regularly to learn more about important issues concerning education and child development. The more the community learns about education, the more effective and invested they will be in the success of DIRT.

We expect community relationships will deepen as the school demonstrates its commitment to the students in this community which will result in support ranging from advocacy to financial or pro-bono contributions to services for families. Many of our board members have extensive experience with community organizing and this will help our team grow DIRT.

J. Financial Management

Budget: DIRT Charter School firmly believes that its teachers and staff, who have the most contact time with students, know best what supplies and resources their students need for a high quality education. Building a yearly budget plan will start with teachers and staff. Each spring the Principal and Director of Business and Operations will meet with DIRT faculty and staff to discuss budget needs as a team. Teachers will bring requests for instructional materials and supplies to these meetings and then discuss and prioritize them as a group. The Principal and Director of Business and Operations will then, after sufficient input, determine the school's needs for the coming year, including staffing, technology, facility, and instructional materials, and develop a budget based on the previous year's revenues and expenditures and projections for the coming year.

The Principal will then recommend a proposed budget to the Board Treasurer who will then present a final budget to the Board for approval in May. The school will maintain a five year budget projection and revise it each year based on current information and long-term strategic plans. Major modifications of the budget will require board approval.

Financial Systems: The school intends to contract with an accounting firm for financial management at least for the first year of operation. DIRT Charter School will look for a firm which has extensive systems for financial management. This accounting firm will be responsible for instructing the school’s staff regarding set up and maintenance of systems for accounting, student and staff records, payroll, tracking of student meals including student eligibility for free and reduced priced meals, enrollment and attendance. Each year, the Board will review the need for an accounting firm vs. hiring a Finance Director to take over responsibility for financial management to determine which proves to be more efficient. Below are the key services provided by an accounting firm during the planning year and once the school is operational:

Planning Year
<p>Payroll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up payroll system using ADP ● Process payroll per school’s pay schedule ● Post payroll expenses in accounting system ● Complete quarterly payroll reconciliations ● Review/distribute W-2s and prepare/distribute 1099s ● File payroll related documents
<p>Finance/Accounting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up accounting system using QuickBooks Online ● Recommend edits for the annual/multi-year budgets (including review of 5 year charter application budget) ● Create/recommend edits for the chart of accounts ● Create/recommend edits for Financial Policies and Procedures (FPP) manual ● Coordinate grant reporting and assess whether grant restrictions are fulfilled ● Reconcile monthly bank statements in the accounting system ● Close books and manage monthly, quarterly and annual fiscal reporting to all constituents including NYSED, Board of Trustees and Principal ● Post revenues & expenses and process deposits & disbursements ● File all financial documentation in CSBM’s Binder System
Operational Years
<p>Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Handle the administration related to HR files ● Enroll/withdraw staff members in benefits including insurance and retirement plans ● Payroll ● Process payroll per school’s pay schedule ● Post payroll expenses in accounting system ● Complete quarterly payroll reconciliations ● Review/distribute W-2s and prepare/distribute 1099s ● File payroll related documents
<p>Finance/Accounting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create/recommend edits for budgets ● Coordinate grant reporting and assess whether grant restrictions are fulfilled ● Reconcile monthly bank statements ● Close books and manage fiscal reporting to all constituents including NYSED, Board and Principal ● Present financial reports to Finance Committee and/or Board of Trustees ● Post revenues & expenses and process deposits & disbursements ● File all financial documentation in Binder System
<p>Audit Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support completion of the 990 by the auditors

- Prepare for on-site testing by auditors
- Close books for the fiscal year
- Prepare all requested schedules/analyses and work with auditors until completion
- Review/recommend edits for draft financial statements and draft management letter
- Participate in meeting with Finance Committee of
- Board of Trustees and auditors

Financial Controls: The board will adopt detailed financial policies and procedures to guide school staff and protect school resources. The Principal and two members of the Board of Trustees will be authorized check signers. Two signatures will be required for any transactions greater than \$5,000. Approval of the Board Chair is required to open a bank account. Clear procedures will be established to ensure:

- Segregation of duties to assure that funds are safeguarded and properly deposited.
- Establishment of controls to ensure that all receipts and expenditures are properly recorded in the accounting records.
- Identification of payments and receipts in sufficient detail to facilitate preparation of the monthly financial reports.

Annual Audits: The school will contract with an independent certified public accountant (CPA) to conduct an annual fiscal audit of all financial reports, including statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, statement of activities, and schedule of functional expenses. All financial transactions will be recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All audits will be conducted in accordance with the Government Auditing Standards. We expect the auditor will produce an Initial Statement of Financial Controls in the beginning of the school year and complete the annual audit the following fall. The board will review all audits, meet with the auditor without school staff present, and monitor all efforts by school leaders to address any found deficiencies.

K. Budget and Cash Flow

We have prepared a budget with assumptions based on the experiences of other charter schools. Our revenue estimates are based on 90% of our target enrollment while expenditures assume 100% enrollment. The per pupil rate varies from district to district in Orange County. Of the parents who have already stated that they are interested in sending their children to DIRT Charter School, approximately 54% are from Warwick Valley, 11% are from Minisink, and 11% are from Goshen, with the rest being from ten other districts in Orange County. The chart below shows our estimated revenue for our first year based on current student interest data.

Estimated Revenue Based on 90% Enrollment

District	Est # of Students Year 1	Est # of Students Year 2	Est # of Students Year 3-5	Per Pupil Rate	Est Revenue Year 1	Estimated Revenue Year 2	Estimated Revenue Year 3-5
Warwick Valley	123	144	166	\$12,198	\$1,500,354	\$1,756,512	\$2,024,868
Minisink	25	30	35	\$10,552	\$263,800	\$316,560	\$369,320
Goshen	25	29	33	\$12,773	\$319,325	\$370,417	\$421,509
Florida	16	18	21	\$14,007	\$224,112	\$252,126	\$294,147
Monroe	9	11	12	\$13,089	\$117,801	\$143,979	\$157,068
Greenwood Lake	7	9	10	\$18,311	\$128,177	\$164,799	\$183,110
Middletown	7	8	9	\$12,759	\$89,313	\$102,072	\$114,831

Valley Central	5	6	7	\$11,222	\$56,110	\$67,332	\$78,554
Pine Bush	3	3	4	\$11,570	\$34,710	\$34,710	\$46,280
Port Jervis	2	2	2	\$11,904	\$23,808	\$23,808	\$23,808
Chester	2	2	2	\$13,170	\$26,340	\$26,340	\$26,340
Tuxedo	3	4	5	\$17,470	\$52,410	\$69,880	\$87,350
Washingtonville	1	1	1	\$11,931	\$11,931	\$11,931	\$11,931
Totals	227	266	306		\$2,836,260	\$3,328,535	\$3,827,185

We have assumed minimal revenue from grants and fundraising and hope to build a school that can ultimately operate primarily on public funds like any other public school.

Pre-Opening Budget:

- **Revenue:** We anticipate revenues based on some fundraising and the first year CSP funding. Our proposed board and advisers have considerable experience with fundraising and have established reasonable fundraising targets.
- **Expenditures:** Expenditures will primarily include hiring the Principal and the Director of Business and Operations and securing a location.
- **Cash Flow:** We anticipate a positive cash balance for each month of the Pre-Opening period. Should the CSP grant arrive later than anticipated, we will consider deferring compensation.

Year 1 Budget:

- **Revenues:** Almost all of our revenue is from per-pupil funding for general and special education students. We have assumed just \$10,000 in revenue from fundraising. We do not expect to receive IDEA funding until Year 2. We have conservatively estimated 10% for our students with disabilities. We also anticipate receiving the second of three CSP installments.
- **Expenditures:** The bulk of expenditures is for salary. About 15% of salary expenses are administration and 74% are instructional staff. Personnel costs, including taxes and benefits, accounts for 67% of total expenditures, with another 6% devoted to contracted services. School operations are 11% and facility operations are 15% of our costs.
- **Cash Flow:** Most start-up costs are incurred early in the year, while salaries are distributed across the year. We project a positive cash balance in all months of the first year of operation.

5 Year Budget:

- **Revenue:** We expect to receive IDEA funds beginning in Year 2 and conservatively assume 10% eligibility. Title I funding will increase commensurate with enrollment. CSP is anticipated in the planning year, Year 1 and Year 2.
- **Expenditures:** Salaries increase 2.5% per year, though in reality that may vary depending on economic conditions. Administration is 11% of salary costs and overall personnel is 73% of total expenditures in Year 5. Facility costs are 12% of total expenditures at the end of the charter term.

Should our assumptions and estimates prove wrong, contingencies include reducing salaries, reducing the number of non-instructional staff, and/or securing a bridge loan until we reach a more sustainable enrollment size.

Charter School Program (CSP) Grant: Our budget assumes only the base amount of \$500,000, though we hope DIRT Charter School will be awarded the entire \$750,000.

Dissolution Plan: The school will accumulate a reserve fund of \$75,000 by setting aside \$25,000 each year for the first three years of operation to cover debts in the case of the school’s dissolution.

L. Pre-Opening Plan

BOT=Board of Trustees; PR=Principal; DBO= Director of Business & Operations

Domain	Action	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Governance	Ratify bylaws and code of ethics	Oct 2013	Oct 2013	BOT
Governance	Appoint board officers	Oct 2013	Oct 2013	BOT
Staffing	Recruit Head of School	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	BOT
Staffing	Recruit Director of Business & Operations	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	BOT, PR
Operations	Obtain 501c3 status	Oct 2013	Apr 2014	BOT
Facility	Conduct facility negotiations and execute lease	Oct 2013	Jan 2014	BOT
Facility	Renovation: identify needs, secure contractor, establish timeline, complete punch list	Nov 2013	May 2014	BOT, PR, DBO
Finance	Approve fiscal policies and procedures	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	BOT
Finance	Contract with an accounting firm to establish payroll and other financial systems	Jan 2014	Jun 2014	BOT, DBO
Recruitment	Recruit students	Jan 2014	Apr 2014	BOT, PR
Recruitment	Hold lottery, inform parents	Apr 2014	Apr 2014	BOT, PR, DBO
Operations	Obtain student records, permission from parents, contact previous schools, etc.	Apr 2014	Jul 2014	PR, DBO
Staffing	Recruit school staff: draft job descriptions, post positions, interview candidates, check references	Feb 2014	Jun 2014	PR, DBO
Staffing	Hire school staff: salary negotiations and offer letters	Mar 2014	Jun 2014	PR, DBO
Academic	Research and secure curriculum resources	Mar 2014	Jun 2014	PR
Finance	Approve budget for Fiscal Year 13-14	Apr 2014	Apr 2014	BOT
Operations	Secure a contract for food services with vendor	Apr 2014	May 2014	DBO
Operations	Secure transportation: contact students home districts, coordinate bus routes/stops, inform parents of options	Apr 2014	Jul 2014	DBO
HR	Finalize staff handbook and personnel policies	Apr 2014	Jun 2014	BOT, PR, DBO
Academic	Prepare school calendar and distribute	Apr 2014	May 2014	PR
Technology	Install Technology	Jun 2014	Aug 2014	DBO
Facility	Obtain Certificate of Occupancy	Jun 2014	Jun 2014	DBO
Recruitment	Conduct open houses for admitted students	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	PR, DBO
Academic	Contract with Related Service Providers	Jun 2014	Aug 2014	PR
Operations	Secure insurance policies	Jun 2014	Jul 2014	DBO
Prof. Dev.	Prepare Summer Staff Training	Jun 2014	Aug 2014	PR
Finance	Complete Initial Statement of Financial Controls	Jul 2014	Jul 2014	DBO
HR	Complete staff fingerprints and background checks	Jul 2014	Jul 2014	DBO, PR
Operations	Secure IEPs and student records	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	DBO, PR
Operations	Create a draft SAVE plan and submit it to SED	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	DBO
Operations	Purchase AEDs and train staff	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	DBO
Prof. Dev.	Conduct Summer Staff Training	Aug 2014	Aug 2014	PR

Academic	Create lesson plans for first weeks of school	Aug 2014	Aug 2014	PR, Teachers
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M. Dissolution Plan

DIRT Charter School will work closely with appropriate representatives of area school districts to develop and implement a dissolution plan that will govern the process of transferring students and student records, including Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), student health and immunization records, attendance records, and report cards. Prior to dissolution, the school will conduct meetings for parents to provide information about the dissolution and to support them in making decisions regarding selection of educational programs for their children.

The Board will designate one trustee and one school employee to oversee the closing of the school from an operational and financial perspective. After an employee termination date is established, the school will notify all employees of termination of employment and/or contracts, and notify benefit providers of pending termination of all employees. Employees will be notified of eligibility for New York State Unemployment Insurance pursuant to any regulations of the New York State Department of Labor. The dissolution plan will provide that all property, which the school has leased, borrowed, or contracted for use will be returned. The return of such property will conform with contractual prearrangement, where applicable, or will be done with reasonable promptness. The school will accumulate a reserve fund by setting aside funds each year for the first three years of operation to cover debts in the case of the school's dissolution. In the event of dissolution of assets in excess of those necessary to meet liabilities, all remaining assets of the school shall be transferred to another charter school within New York State as designated by the Board.

Attachment 1: Admissions Policy and Procedures

All students who reside in the state of New York are eligible to attend DIRT Charter School. The school shall be open to any child who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school, and the school shall ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools. There are no financial or academic requirements for admission to DIRT Charter School; admission of students shall not be limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, ethnicity, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, or for any other basis that would be unlawful for a public school. Children will be admitted to kindergarten who have reached the age of five by December 1 of the year in which they apply. The school intends to admit new students into kindergarten through 8th grade each year as space permits.

DIRT will engage in extensive efforts to inform families in Orange County about the new school. We will reach out to local schools, community-based organizations, businesses and religious organizations to raise awareness in the community. We will conduct open houses at the school; disseminate materials and host information sessions at day care centers, public and private elementary schools. Parental outreach and recruitment activities will be conducted in multiple languages.

To apply to DIRT Charter School, the only requirement is that the school receives a completed application for the child. Applications must be submitted by April 1st by families of students interested in attending the school. Applications must be hand delivered, mailed or e-mailed, and received no later than the admission period deadline listed on the form. The school will provide, via e-mail, confirmation of applications received by the deadline.

The DIRT Charter School application form will be designed in accordance with the State Education Department guidelines. The school will adapt the uniform application form within the following allowable parameters: print the application form with the school's letterhead and/or logo; brand the application form by including the school's mission statement and explanatory information about the school, and request additional information. All data elements that may be required to be submitted by the applicant will be marked with asterisk and the form will include the following notation: “* The items marked with an asterisk (*) are the only items that may be required in order to apply to this charter school. Any items not marked by an (*) are optional.”

The following statement will also be included in the application form:

Non-Discrimination Statement: *A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.*

The application will request information about students' eligibility for free- and reduced-price meals, but will not require that information.

DIRT Charter School will use the following preferences to enroll new students:

- Siblings of students enrolled in the school will have an absolute preference. When a student in the lottery with sibling(s) in the lottery is drawn, that student's sibling(s) will be

- added next to the list.
- Students residing within the district of location will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living outside the district.

If the number of applicants exceeds the school's capacity, a random selection lottery process will be conducted on or about April 15, but no earlier than April 1. The lottery will be conducted by the Principal, a board member and a third adult who has no affiliation with the school. The actual process will be open to the public. After checking the birth dates to make sure that the application is the appropriate age for the entering grade, the child's name will be entered into the lottery. The following will also be noted for each child entered into the lottery:

- If there are siblings applying, each child's entry into the lottery will indicate that there is a sibling also applying.
- The place of residence will be noted so that preference can be given to students living in the school district in which DIRT is located.

The lottery will follow these steps for each grade:

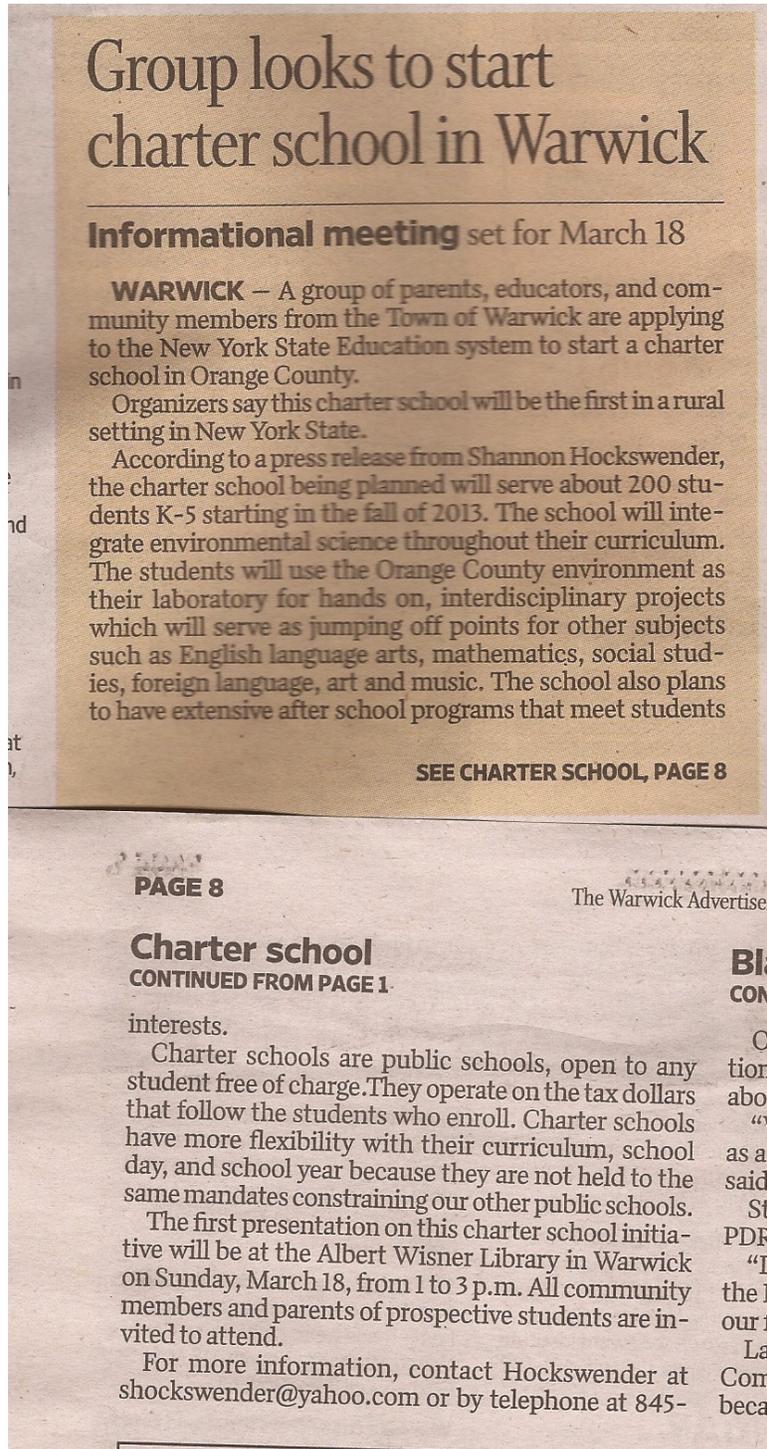
1. Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will be drawn
2. Students who reside within DIRT's home school district will be drawn
3. Students who reside outside of DIRT's home school district will be drawn

Once the number of students equal to the number of available seats, the remaining applicants will be drawn and placed on the waitlist in the order in which they are drawn. After all the names have been chosen, the parents will be notified by letter. For those students who are accepted, the letter will include a list of forms that need to be provided, specifically an original birth certificate, social security card, immunization records and proof of address, and a time to turn over the forms. Parents/guardians will be expected to document residence at the time of registration following our lottery; acceptable documentation will include a lease and/or utility bill.

For children not selected, the letter will indicate their number on the waitlist, and will describe the steps that will take place if a space becomes available. That wait list will be maintained for the entire year. If a student withdraws, the next applicant on the waitlist in that grade will be called and offered the space. Student withdrawal will be permitted upon the written request of the parent or legal guardian and proof of enrollment in another school. Following the written request of the admitting school, student records will be transferred. If a student does not return in September, the school will telephone and send the family a certified letter to determine the child's status. When a space opens, the waiting list will then be activated to admit the next child on the same grade level. For applications received after the April 1 deadline, those students will be added to the waitlist in the order they are submitted. The wait list will expire annually at the lottery drawing for the next school year.

After the first year, students returning to the school will be considered to be enrolled in each successive year through the completion of 8th grade. Each year, school personnel will contact the families of all parents and guardians of currently enrolled students in writing to discuss enrollment plans for the following school year. Parents or guardians must then submit to the school a letter of intent confirming their desire to enroll their child(ren) in the school for the following year.

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
Warwick Advertiser front page announcement on March 2, 2012 of our first informational meeting.



Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
Times Herald Record Article from March 2, 2012

recordonline.com
TIMES HERALD-RECORD

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NEWS SPORTS COMMUNITY BUSINESS MULTIMEDIA OPINION ENTERTAINMENT LIFESTYLE HEALTH

Warwick group seeks charter school with green focus

By Meghan E. Murphy
Times Herald-Record
Published: 2:00 AM - 03/02/12

Text Size: A | A | A
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A group of Warwick parents, educators and community members are crafting a proposal for a charter school focused on sustainability and the environment.

If successful, the school would be the first rural charter school in Orange County. Applications for schools opening for the 2013-14 school year are due to the state in July.

A few proposals for Hudson Valley charter schools have emerged and fizzled before jumping the hurdles of a complicated state application. A group in Newburgh is also mounting an application this year for a charter high school to educate drop-out students.

The Warwick group is considering locations throughout southern Orange County, looking to draw some 200 students to a kindergartenthrough-sixth-grade program. The group believes it could make use of one of several empty school buildings in the region, including Pine Island Elementary School.

Shannon Hockswender, a preschool teacher creating curriculum for the proposal, said the group members are interested in an alternative education model. While recognizing that students succeed in Warwick schools, she said parents aren't satisfied with the standardization of learning.

"A lot of education right now is top-down coming from the government. It's standards, it's curriculum, and it's not being child driven," Hockswender said.

The charter school program will incorporate outdoor learning and use local farm products as much as possible in the school lunch program, parent and teacher Christina Pahucki said.

"We live in an area that is so bountiful with ways to incorporate science, nature, and the environment into an education that I really wanted to be a part of something like that," Tracey Pietrzak, a Warwick parents, said.

The group has a lot of work ahead to meet the July application deadline. It must hold community meetings, garner support from parents and community groups, and complete a detailed application.

The first community presentation will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. March 18 at the Albert Wisner Library in Warwick.

mmurphy@th-record.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page



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Growing a new school from ‘DIRT’

Pine Island-based group hopes to open charter school by fall 2013

PUBLISHED MAR 15, 2012 AT 10:35 AM (UPDATED MAR 15, 2012)

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By Abby Wolf

WARWICK — Citing a desire for a more innovative curriculum and a school free of mandates that they see as too restrictive, a local group of parents, educators and members of the community are applying to The Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York, to open Orange County’s first charter school.

Shannon Hockswender, spokeswoman for the proposed new school, said that the parents she’s spoken with want a school that would be “innovative and unique.”

While many students initially may come from Pine Island and Warwick in general, her group “also wanted to draw kids from all over Orange County – we may have a shot (at getting state and federal funds)” for the new school, she said.

The school, to be named DIRT – an acronym for “Developing Innovative Rural Thinking” – would teach environmental studies and have science as its main focus, while concentrating on agriculture.



Public school – with a difference

Charter schools are technically public schools in that they are free – they’re paid for by taxes – and are open to all students. The difference is that they have more flexibility with the curriculum, the school day and length of the school year. Some charter schools focus on arts or business or foreign languages, for example.

Further, charter schools may apply for and receive private money in the form of grants.

No “cherry-picking”

Contrary to popular belief, a charter school may not simply siphon off the top students in a given district.

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page (continued)

Students may come from the town in which the school is sited, or they may live in surrounding towns. A charter school is open to all students, on a first-come, first served, basis. Depending upon the size of the school and the need, additional prospective students may be put on a waiting list, and then be chosen by lottery to attend.

In the case of DIRT charter school, Hockswender has more than 100 prospective students from Warwick, Florida, Minisink, Goshen, Westtown, Middletown, Chester, Campbell Hall and Unionville.

DIRT ultimately plans to serve 200 students, K-5.

"When you're granted a charter, you want to pull from all areas (versus just one district)," Hockswender said.

Flexibility for teachers, choice in learning for students

Teachers in charter schools have more latitude to teach their courses – they can choose to spend a greater part of the school day on a given subject, versus the need to spend, say, 60 instructional minutes of a class day on English Language Arts in a conventional public school, Hockswender noted.

"You could have (for example) a two-hour block of ELA" one day, perhaps 30 minutes the next day, and spend additional time on subjects such as science or art.

Hockswender said that the charter school setting also permits kids to "have some choice in their learning ... to have ownership."

She added that teachers and students can do more project-based activities, using the Constructivist model of learning. (Constructivism is a form of educational theory that says that students learn collaboratively with their teachers, constructing their own understanding of the material, as opposed to learning and memorizing discrete bits of knowledge that the teacher gives them, which is the educational norm.)

Interdisciplinary curriculum

Hockswender found "Seeds to Read," a combined science and reading curriculum: "It was field-tested and approved (by NYSED) ... (but a typical) public school wouldn't pick this ... (they) would do a science, a reading and a math separately."

In addition to environmental science, the proposed curriculum will include ELA, math, social studies, foreign language art and music, as well as after-school programs.

She added that the actual curriculum is still being developed, and will then be presented to the public, followed by a budget.

Standards

Still, charter schools must follow (state and federal) core teaching standards, and teachers are required to submit exit standards before promoting kids to the next grade level, to make sure that "kids are ready to move on," Hockswender said.

Students at charter schools are still required to take state standardized tests, particularly the ELA and math.

According to The Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York Web site:

"As set forth in the Practices, Policies and Procedures for the Renewal of Charter Schools Authorized by the State University Board of Trustees, the single most important factor that the Charter Schools Institute and the State University Board of Trustees consider in making renewal determinations is the school's record in generating successful student achievement outcomes. Whatever grades a school is providing, the expectation is that most if not all of the students will leave the school fully prepared and educated for the next step in their

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Advertiser Article from the March 15, 2012 front page (continued)

academic careers—middle school, high school or college.

In order to determine whether a school has met that high standard, each charter school that the State University Board of Trustees authorizes is required to enter into a performance agreement, known as the Accountability Plan, which becomes part of its charter.”

Having a mission

The state, Hockswender continued, will only grant charters to schools “with a distinct, succinct and consistent vision and mission.” Everyone involved has to be on the same page.

Special-needs students

Another advantage to the charter school model, according to Hockswender, is that the school does not need to have a Special Education teacher on staff, but rather has the flexibility to contract one out from a service provider, based on the number of Special Education students in a given year.

Limits on charter school funds

There are some restrictions on funding for these alternative schools: Funds may not be used for construction, re-construction, acquisition, rehabilitation or improvement of school facilities; however, the school may apply to the Charter School Stimulus Funds. Also, charter schools are permitted to accept gifts and grants to cover start-up costs. “It’s a lot of paperwork,” Hockswender said.

How did DIRT get its name?

“We were looking at a bunch of names, including place names, then we learned that the charter school commissioner wants the (school’s) name to match its mission,” Hockswender said. The name is very much in keeping with the environmental mission and agricultural area.

Why a charter school now?

“In so many New York State districts, the government is taking away funding for schools and our kids...we have to get creative for our kids,” Hockswender said.

She continued: “It’s interesting that there’s funding for charter schools, but no money for regular public schools.”

While DIRT is planned to be a K-5 charter school, Hockswender’s board’s survey results showed an interest in a middle school charter school eventually.

Process

Hockswender and DIRT’s board must complete and mail in an application to the Charter Board in Albany, and must undergo an interview process.

While some charter schools have failed because their boards weren’t consistent in their mission, Hockswender believes DIRT will do OK.

On the other hand, she said that even if the application is denied for a charter school in Orange County this time, “It’s been a great process,” and she’s “learned a lot.”



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**Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
The Warwick Valley Dispatch front page from March 21, 2012**



50 CENTS

Digging Deeper into DIRT

By Nora Gurvich

A group of local educators, parents and business owners who are attempting to create the first rural charter school in New York State gave a presentation at the library to a crowd with opposing viewpoints about the sensitive subject on Sun., March 18.

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School, or DIRT, would be a science, technology and environmentally focused charter school in Orange County for kindergarten through fifth grade with the hopes of adding sixth grade in its second year of existence.

Lead applicant, and a member of both the planning and curriculum teams for DIRT, Shannon Hockswender introduced herself as an educator with 20 years of experience. Hockswender stated that the team of people corroborating to open DIRT are educators and community members with a shared philosophy, "to develop a school that would instill a joy for learning in the children."

The presentation touched on general information beginning with what a charter school is, and then explained how charter schools are monitored. Following introductory material, Hockswender moved on to the more specific topic of the DIRT school; from the immediate and future plans and curriculum for DIRT, to the food services, technology and athletic programming intended at DIRT, to funding and accountability required of running a charter school.

What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are tuition-free public schools, open to all children; which operate independently of the hosting district. They are often created by parents, educators, and community leaders that are seeking an alternative to an existing public education system, and do not require the permission of the hosting district.

Charters are required to administer state tests and each state standards, but can govern themselves and therefore do not have to follow some of the mandates that traditional public schools must adhere to, giving them



Photo by Nora Gurvich

Allison Berman (from left) and Shannon Hockswender, of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking Charter School movement, gave a presentation at the Albert Wisner Public Library about their intentions of opening the first rural charter school in New York State.

more flexibility and autonomy. Charter schools are monitored by the State Education Department and the Board of Regents, and have to complete the same school report card and audit reports as traditional public schools.

Charter school budgets come from the taxpayers in the district of the attending students. This means that sixty to seventy percent of the tax dollars it costs to educate a student that resides in Warwick would follow that child to DIRT, while the remaining thirty to forty percent would remain with the residing district for transportation and special education costs. Likewise if a student resided in Westtown the same percentage of tax dollars would follow that child to DIRT, and so on. Charters also often rely on grant money for financial support of their schools, making the challenge of successfully running an independent school that much greater.

Students are taken on a first come first served basis until the school is at full capacity. DIRT intends to educate 210 students. Once full, remaining students interested in attending would be put in to a lottery system in the event that a space should open up at the school.

With nearly 5000 charter schools in the United States educating over one million students, a charter school is not a rare or unusual concept.

Why a Charter School?

Additional photo on page 5

Digging Deeper into DIRT

When questioned about the impulse to create DIRT Hockswender replied that as an educator she has always thought charter schools are exciting because of the flexibility they allow in curriculum and technique.

Allison Berman, a parent and member of the DIRT start-up committee specializing in food services, commented that, "For me it was food services and about supporting the community. We have all these great farms around here and the students could really get involved." DIRT intends to have the students actively participate in the food services process from planting and harvesting crops to preparing meals for the school. Hockswender summed up the response by saying that "at the heart of it, it's about the kids."

This is not the first time a group of citizens have attempted to create a charter school in the area. Past attempts at a charter school in and around Warwick occurred back in 1996 and again in 2006. The first application was denied, and the second time the application process was never completed as the project never made it to that stage of development.

When questioned why this attempt would be different the answer was that this is a different group of people coming together to create something, and the mission and focus of this school is unique. DIRT's focus is one in keeping with the acronym as the curriculum as explained by Hockswender delves into agriculture, earth science, mathematics, art, music, and exploratory foundational experiences in engineering through experiential and integrated learning that crosses over all subjects.

The Process of Securing a Charter

Although New York has hundreds of charter schools, none are in a rural setting. The application process is an arduous one beginning with a submission of a letter of intent and showing community outreach and support, and continuing with a completed proposal due to the New York State Department of Education in July. The committee will hear the decision in Sept. If approved, that gives the school one year to be up and running.

When asked about the location of the

continued from page 1

said that the conversation was just beginning. Pahucki said "We are looking at vacant school buildings in Orange County."

Opposing Viewpoints

"My overall reaction at this point is that I don't see the benefit over what we already have in Warwick. And it will financially hit the school system" said Dave Eaton, president of the Warwick Valley Central School District Board of Education. "We have high performance schools," he continued.

Given the current economic climate, concerns were voiced over the loss of revenue to school districts. As around seventy percent of the tax dollars to educate a child would go with the student to their new school it was wondered what that would mean to the district the student resides in. Comments included that a loss of revenue could result in programming being in jeopardy in the school systems. In response to this question the committee members said they couldn't know, but that their intent was not to harm the districts or schools, but to do what is best for the children.

Several attendees conveyed that this movement should be a wake-up call for school administrations and districts. With over one hundred families already showing interest in the new school from communities throughout Orange County including Florida, Goshen, Greenwood Lake, Minisink, Montgomery, Walden, Westtown and Warwick, it was suggested that the schools might ask themselves why parents are seeking an alternative to the public education available to their children.

More Information

The DIRT initiative is seeking help from administrators, educators, and the greater public throughout Orange County as the school will be open to children in the entire county.

The DIRT committee intends to present again in the county, looking for dates in Greenwood Lake, Middletown and Westtown. More information about the presentation and charter school is available at www.dirtcharter.com.

Editor's Note: Nora Gurvich, a reporter for the Warwick Valley Dispatch, is also a member of the DIRT Charter School committee assisting

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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press

The Warwick Valley Dispatch in the Letters to the Editor Section from April 4, 2012 under the question "There's discussion of Opening a Charter School in Warwick that Would be the First Rural Charter School in New York State. How Do You Think This Would Affect Warwick?"



"Charter schools can be a positive thing if they do not have a negative impact on the greater majority of the people. I'm not sure if having one here is a good idea because I can see a negative impact on programs like PIE and the class sizes in the other schools. I'm not sure we have the population to support it. In general, I think they are a good idea, especially in troubled areas where students don't have a lot of choices in districts that have problems. Charter schools there would give motivated students choices. I'm just not sure that is the situation here in Warwick."

Sharon Scott
Arundel Publishing, Editor



"The only thing I've heard about charter schools is that a lot of people like them. There might be a different curriculum. It might not be as strict. Now students are on such a tight schedule. I know we didn't do nearly as much as they do in school now, and sometimes a kid has to be a kid not just a robot. I don't know enough about the one they are talking about making in Pine Island. They've got to cover the basics and they need to use more books than computers because without a computer, students don't even know how to open up a book today. I think too much information can be too much. If a charter school can make it not as hard for the kids, then I like it. A lot of times, as soon as my daughter comes home she has to do homework. It's not a lot of homework but for a 6-year-old, it is a lot to do after school. She is in the top of her class at Sandfordville, though, so what do you say? 'It's too hard on her but she's doing great?' She's missing out on being a kid. The homework doesn't leave much time for play. If the charter school they want to make here is agricultural, that would be good. Having that agricultural component will teach them a work ethic besides brain ethics. You need both to be a well-rounded person. To grow your own food is excellent. Our farm has been certified organic since 1976. My daughter can eat anything out of our farm without washing it. Learning about growing food is teaching the kids to sustain their own selves down the road."

Vincent D'Attolico (& Clarice)
Certified Organic Farmer



"I think the enrollment might go down in the local schools, but not by much because the charter schools are a small population. It depends on how you feel about it. I personally like public school. I went to public school. My kids go to public school. I like choice. I think it's a good thing to have choice. If the charter school here is agricultural, that could be a good thing. But I like the public schools."

Lauren Decker
Driving School Instructor & School Bus Driver



"In general, I'm a supporter of charter schools and bringing people a choice of how to get their education if that's what they want. I think it's always a good thing to have choice. Competition always makes things better. Sometimes you get too comfortable in a situation and rest on your laurels, so sometimes a charter school can push them to improve the public school."

Stuart
Athletic Trainer

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Press
Times Herald Record Article from July 17, 2012

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4 of mid-Hudson's proposed charter schools clear major hurdles

Photo 1 of 1 | Zoom Photo + **BUY PHOTO**



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Four proposed charter schools in the area are nearer than ever to opening. Ben Pahucki, 8; Shannon Hockswender, a lead applicant for the proposed DIRT charter school; Samantha Pahucki, 11; and Owen Hockswender, 10, learn about turtles in Pine Island on Monday.

John DeSanto/Times Herald-Record

By Pauline Liu
Times Herald-Record
Published: 2:00 AM - 07/17/12

All four of the mid-Hudson's charter school proposals have made it one step closer to opening their doors next year.

On Friday, the state Education Department allowed the two remaining proposals to advance to the next phase, which is submitting full applications. The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School is an elementary school proposed for southern Orange County, while the Newburgh Preparatory Charter High School would serve dropouts in the Greater Newburgh area.

"I'm elated because we get to submit this application, into which we put so much hard work," said Tom Fitzgerald, who is the organizer behind Newburgh Prep.

Earlier this month, the SUNY board approved two potential charter schools here to move on to the next round. They are Hudson Scholars Charter School and the Liberty Public Charter School, which have been proposed for Newburgh and Middletown, respectively. They applied for charters or contracts from the SUNY Charter Institute.

Three of the schools are applying to open by September 2013. The Hudson Scholars Charter School has a proposed opening of August 2013.

Instead of being overseen by a board of education and a schools superintendent, each charter school is run by a board of trustees. They offer an alternative to district-run public schools. Most also have longer school days.

Now the waiting game has begun. The two applicants to SUNY must wait to see if they'll be invited to face-to-face interviews with members of the Charter Institute next month. If they advance to the next phase, SUNY charter applicants could be awarded charters by October.

For state Board of Regents applicants, there's a longer wait. The Regents will vote on who will be awarded charters at its meeting in December.

pliu@th-record.com

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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



Footings, Inc.

*We Build Community Supports
We Build Success*

PO Box 2038
Monroe, NY 10949
Phone: (845) 783-7505
Fax: (845) 781-7961
E-mail: footings.org@juno.com

Ms. Christina Pahucki
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

3/1/2013

Dear Chrissy;

It is an honor to support the development of the DIRT Charter School. As a not-for-profit founded to address what we perceived as unmet needs for children, especially those with special needs, Footings, Inc. can certainly support and understand the drive behind wanting to effect and influence the education of our children.

As you know, our mission is to empower children and young adults; to stimulate critical thinking and problem solving skills and to promote citizenship through lives of purpose. I see our goals and those of the DIRT Charter School to be very complimentary. Please allow me to reintroduce you to our ClubRec Program to demonstrate my point.

Our ClubRec Program is a unique, non-traditional academic support, social recreation after-school program that helps kids learn how to think on their feet- how to anticipate problems and possible solutions – how to think creatively and critically, all while having FUN! Based on the concept of “community as laboratory” ClubRec acknowledges that all children need to know that they belong and they are valued. Working with schools, we provide a safe place for kids to be that addresses issues linked to character education, violence prevention, avoidance of high risk behaviors and academic performance. We feel these issues require a comprehensive approach that is woven into the daily lives of the children.

We wish you every success and hope that you will contact us so that we may work together in contributing to the education and formation of fully contributing citizens that will live lives of self-direction, personal responsibility and entrepreneurship; lives of hope and promise and self-reliance.

I cannot think of a better way to spend our tax dollars.

Sincerely,

Rori

Rori Cooper Corbin
President

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



Pine Island Chamber of Commerce

June 2, 2012

Ms. Christina Pahucki
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Dear Ms. Pahucki:

As a community non-profit organization, the Pine Island Chamber was founded to support, protect and promote the people, businesses and land in this unique black dirt region. We do so through a variety of community events, an on-going beautification program, community farmers market, local business publicity and promotion, a black dirt scholarship program, and more. Pine Island is a hamlet of the Town of Warwick and works cooperatively with surrounding communities for the benefit of our members and residents.

We are in full support of the proposal for the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (D.I.R.T.) Charter School in our community, and the potential it has for providing a hands-on rural learning environment for elementary students in the region.

The school's theme and proposed curriculum are in line with the area's agricultural heritage, as well as a perfect fit for the many outdoor/farming/ environmental learning opportunities that exist in and around the hamlet.

There are many natural, cooperative relationships that can be fostered that would benefit the children's studies as well as benefit the community. Examples include the many local produce, dairy, and sod farms, local producers of eggs and honey, the local historical society, access to a number of natural creeks and rivers, a nearby wildlife refuge and Appalachian Trail access point, unique local geology, local farmers markets, local preschool, and more!

An elementary school in our hamlet also provides additional jobs, visitors and customers to frequent our local businesses.

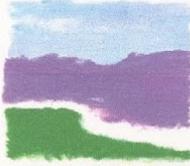
We enthusiastically support the possibilities this charter school presents. Let us know what we can do to help!

Sincerely,

Marlene Caraballo
Marlene Caraballo
President

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

**THE WALLKILL
RIVER SCHOOL**



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Jacobowitz and Gubits
Walden, NY.

"Local Color, Local Flavor, Local Art!"

June 1, 2012

New York State Board of Education

Re:
DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

Dear Board of Education-

Our organization highly recommends chartering the DIRT Charter School for Orange County. We are a nonprofit 501©3 artist's cooperative with a mission of creating economic opportunity for local artists, and preserving our small farms and agricultural heritage. Part of our efforts are raising awareness of our region's rich agricultural history, particularly in the Black Dirt area, which produces our nation's onion supply.

Our children are growing up in a region with a unique history and geography that most are oblivious to. Our public school system is very homogenized without much local emphasis, or arts education. The DIRT Charter School can fill a niche here, and connect our children with the land that sustains us through art and education.

We intend to support the DIRT Charter School with our artistic resources, and assist this sister organization in becoming a much-needed flourishing program in our county. We urge you to do the same, and thank you. Please feel free to contact me personally if there is anything further you need.

Sincerely,

Shawn Dell Joyce
Director
Cell (845) 728-4001

232 Ward St. Montgomery, NY 12549 (845) 457-ARTS (2787)
www.WallkillRiverSchool.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



THE GRANGE

AMERICA'S FAMILY COMMUNITY FRATERNITY

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950 May 1, 2012

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950, Patrons of Husbandry support the Dirt Charter School initiative, (Developing Innovative Rural Thinking). the National Grange, a Family Fraternity, which was organized in 1867, with the Subordinate Granges. (Community Granges) started in 1868: Have as one of their declarations of Purposes, to advance the cause of education, we recognize the necessity to develop new and better methods of education. Thus we support the Dirt Charter School initiative.

Hamptonburgh Grange # 950

Frances Hulle, Secretary

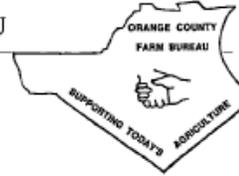
Frances Hulle

28 Hulle Road
Middletown, New York, 10941

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

ORANGE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

193 BIG ISLAND ROAD
WARWICK, NY 10990
845-651-3300



DIRT Charter School
PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY 10969

July 3, 2012

To Whom it May Concern,

Orange County Farm Bureau was excited to hear about the potential for a rural-oriented elementary school in our area. We feel that agricultural and environmental education are of increasing importance for youth who will be responsible for feeding 2.4 billion more by 2050 on the same (or less) land than we currently farm in 2012. The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School may be a way for us to reach that goal as community members and as consumers.

We support a school that will offer interdisciplinary learning, unique hands-on opportunities and standard academics, all with an eye on community and the earth. As farmers and environmentalists, we are very interested in seeing the plan for the DIRT Charter School come to fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Lupinski".

John Lupinski, President

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support

Orange County
Vegetable Improvement Cooperative
Association, Inc.

8 Scanlon Ave.
Florida, New York 10921

OFFICERS

Paul Ruskiewicz DIRT Charter School
President PO Box 23
Pine Island, NY Pine Island, NY 10969
John Glebocki
Vice President
Goshen, NY June 19, 2012

Carol Korey
Secretary
Florida, NY

Alex Kocot, Jr.
Treasurer
Warwick, NY

Dear NYS Education Department,

This letter is in support of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School. As we are faced with the challenge of feeding a growing population (estimated to be 2.4 billion by 2050) the importance of agricultural and environmental education of our young people becomes increasingly vital.

The Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association feels that given the strong agricultural industry in Orange County, a charter school of this nature would be extremely beneficial to our area. Therefore, we fully support the plan for the DIRT Charter School and we look forward to seeing it come to fruition.

Sincerely,



Paul Ruskiewicz
President

DIRECTORS

Ronald Myruski
Chris Pawelski
Russ Kowal
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Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letters of Support



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July 18, 2012

New York State Board of Education

Re: DIRT Charter School

Dear Board of Education:

The Orange County Arts Council is a non-profit arts service organization whose goal is to promote, support and unite the arts in the county and to look for ways in which we can integrate the arts into the fabric of our community life. As such, we enthusiastically support the DIRT Charter School which will provide a unique opportunity to educate our students and the community about our farms and our agricultural history through mediums such as art and music.

At the Arts Council, we believe strongly that involvement in the arts helps students to develop critical thinking skills, embrace diversity and become better citizens. The DIRT Charter School will establish this very important foundation for our students. I have had the pleasure of working with several of the individuals involved in the development of this project and believe strongly that their combined talent, dedication and commitment will result in the successful creation of this very valuable asset for the county.

The Orange County Arts Council is prepared to support this project in any way we can. Please let us know how we can help.

Best Regards,

Dawn Ansbro
Executive Director

www.ocartscouncil.org

P.O. Box 574
Sugar Loaf, New York 10981
Tel 845.469.9168 • Fax 845.469.3145

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to the Minisink Superintendent of Schools

Minisink Central School District
P.O. Box 217
Rte. 6, Slate Hill, NY 10973

July 26, 2012

Dear Superintendent Latini,

My name is Shannon Hockswender and I am a member of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School applicant team. Our team is applying to the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents in the hopes of creating an elementary charter school for Orange County students. The school would open in September 2013 and would serve Kindergarten through fifth grade students, in 2014, sixth grade would be added.

Our team vision is to create a school that embraces the rich history of agriculture in Orange County. One of the key design elements at DIRT Charter School will be to provide each student with a solid foundation in the Environmental Sciences. Students at our school will spend a significant portion of instructional time outdoors engaged in hands-on learning. Our curriculum will also have a strong character education component. Teachers will concentrate on guiding students to be the best they can be, providing each student with a high level of instructional support. Our school will be small with two classes at each grade level with a maximum of 250 students. Any student that lives in Orange County will be eligible to be a student at DIRT Charter School.

In an effort to create a diverse and well-balanced student population our public outreach team has been hosting informational meetings about our proposed school throughout Orange County. We have created a website (www.dirtcharter.com) where you can find information about our proposed school and contact members of our team with questions.

We submitted a Letter of Intent, which has been accepted by the NYS Board of Regents. Our next step in the process is to submit our full charter school application, which is due on July 31, 2012. Part of the application process requires us (under charter school law) to notify any and all community stakeholders that a charter school may either be located in your school district and/or your students may be able to attend such school. We do not have a set location for our school yet, however an ideal one would have a large outdoor area for our students to work in. Two facilities/spaces that we are listing on our application as possibilities are located in Minisink.

We welcome any comments or questions from you and can be reached through our website, listed above, or you can call our media contact person, Ms. Alison Berman at (646) 773-4081 or email her at ali@withlovealib.com

Respectfully,
Shannon Hockswender
Member of the DIRT Charter School Application Team

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to the Florida Superintendent of Schools

Florida Central School District

51 North Main St.
Florida, NY 10921

July 26, 2012

Dear Superintendent Munro,

My name is Shannon Hockswender and I am a member of the Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School applicant team. Our team is applying to the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents in the hopes of creating an elementary charter school for Orange County students. The school would open in September 2013 and would serve Kindergarten through fifth grade students, in 2014, sixth grade would be added.

Our team vision is to create a school that embraces the rich history of agriculture in Orange County. One of the key design elements at DIRT Charter School will be to provide each student with a solid foundation in the Environmental Sciences. Students at our school will spend a significant portion of instructional time outdoors engaged in hands-on learning. Our curriculum will also have a strong character education component. Teachers will concentrate on guiding students to be the best they can be, providing each student with a high level of instructional support. Our school will be small with two classes at each grade level with a maximum of 250 students. Any student that lives in Orange County will be eligible to be a student at DIRT Charter School.

In an effort to create a diverse and well-balanced student population our public outreach team has been hosting informational meetings about our proposed school throughout Orange County. We have created a website (www.dirtcharter.com) where you can find information about our proposed school and contact members of our team with questions.

We submitted a Letter of Intent, which has been accepted by the NYS Board of Regents. Our next step in the process is to submit our full charter school application, which is due on July 31, 2012. Part of the application process requires us (under charter school law) to notify any and all community stakeholders that a charter school may either be located in your school district and/or your students may be able to attend such school. We do not have a set location for our school yet, however an ideal one would have a large outdoor area for our students to work in. Two facilities/spaces that we are listing on our application as possibilities are located in Florida.

We welcome any comments or questions from you and can be reached through our website, listed above, or you can call our media contact person, Ms. Alison Berman at (646) 773-4081 or email her at ali@withlovealib.com

Respectfully,
Shannon Hockswender
Member of the DIRT Charter School Application Team

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Letter to Warwick's School Board

March 28, 2012

Board of Education
Warwick Valley Central School District
PO Box 595
Warwick, NY 10990

Re: D.I.R.T. Charter School

Members of the Board of Education,

This letter is a follow-up to a meeting I had with Dr. Bryant on February 29, 2012. During that meeting we discussed several issues, one of which was a group of parents and community members who are interested in starting a charter school in Orange County. I explained that we are in the process of applying to the state for a charter and that we are considering a number of possible locations in southern Orange County, including the Pine Island School.

While Dr. Bryant did not feel that a charter school would be feasible in Orange County, he did indicate that if the building were available when and if a charter was approved then it could be possible for the BOE to lease the building for that purpose.

Therefore, I would like to respectfully request that the board consider the possibility of leasing the Pine Island School to the D.I.R.T Charter School once a charter is granted. With 170 prospective students the Pine Island School would be a good location for this purpose. I realize that part of the building is currently being leased to the Visions Community Church. We feel that it would be possible for both the DIRT Charter and the church to share the building.

While I understand that the Board may not be supportive of a charter school opening in Warwick for a number of reasons, I would like to ask that you seriously consider this request as I feel it would be an efficient use of the building and would provide revenue for the district.

If you have any questions or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for considering this request.

Respectfully,

Paul Ruskiewicz
PO Box 46
Pine Island, NY 10969
845-726-4518
paulruszk@msn.com

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Website



Home About Us Q & A Charter School Information News Contact Us



Welcome to DIRT Charter School

The Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School is a proposed charter school that plans to open its doors in September 2014. DIRT Charter School will be the first rural charter school in New York State. The school will integrate environmental science throughout their curriculum. Students will use the Orange County environment as their laboratory for hands on, interdisciplinary projects which will serve as jumping off points for other subjects such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Art and Music. DIRT Charter School also plans to have extensive after school programs that meet student's interests.

DIRT Working Towards a 2014 Opening

February 15, 2013 - DIRT's Letter of Intent was accepted by the NYSED and we were invited to submit our full application. Of a total 49 submitted Letters of Intent submitted to the NYSED, just 27 were accepted (including DIRT's) and invited to move to the Full Application phase of the process. For a look at our Letter of Intent, it is posted on the NYSED Charter School Office Website at: [DIRT Charter School](#)

Upcoming events

The Greenwood Lake Board of Education is conducting an informational session open to the public on charter schools in general. Representatives from the Charter School Office, Office of Innovative Schools, NYS Education Department will be guest presenters and be available to answer any questions that anyone may have. Join us at the Greenwood Lake Elementary School, 80 Waterstone Road, Wednesday, February 20th at 7 PM. For additional information, call 845-782-8678, extension 51100.

Sampling of Comments from the website:

“Thank you for taking the initiative to start this process. We would be thrilled to have our daughter attend a progressive school that would expand her horizons. We know children who have benefited greatly from the charter school experience and are behind you all the way.”

- Martha, Warwick, NY

“I would love to see future children of Warwick have the same experience in education as other children....”

- RoseMary, Chester, NY

“The proposed school will give kids opportunities they can't get any other way. Innovative education and curriculum are more important than the politics and rigidity that stifle creative kids and regiment the rest.”

- Pat, Warwick, NY

“I absolutely LOVE the idea of the Charter school, though, since I have already started looking into the idea of Montessori/Waldorf schools as well. I think the charter school would be great for us. Thanks!!!”

- Kristen, Warwick, NY

“The state has increased mandates and decreased funding options for the school districts. This

reality, in combination with mismanagement of funds and misguided priorities on the part of the local school boards is tearing apart our education system. I would welcome the chance to send my children to a school that could give them better opportunities in life. Also, if the local school districts have to compete for student tax dollars, the school boards might strive to better answer the needs of it's local families. Regardless of the outcome, I applaud and appreciate your efforts.”
- Audra, Westtown, NY

“My wife is a Montessori teacher and we were fortunate enough to send all 5 of our children to Montessori schools for a few years. While we live in Montgomery, which is a good school district, we wish there were more choices for private non-religious schools in the area. As they got older, we wound up having our kids spread out in 3 different school districts last year, which was just unmanageable. After much deliberation we decided to enroll them all in Valley Central to have them in the same school district. We love Montgomery Elementary, but strongly feel that there should be more choice, considering the high school taxes we all pay in Orange County. I will do all I can to support this Charter School as I feel we are very fortunate to live in such a beautiful area of the State and Country. PLEASE contact me if our family can be of any assistance. I feel that through hard work and persistence with our State Government, there is no reason this shouldn't become a reality.”
Walter, Montgomery, NY

“Orange County is in dire need of a charter school.”
- Nancy, Westtown, NY

“I would LOVE LOVE LOVE to have my children in a Charter school !! We were originally going to home school because of my differences in regards to how the public school is run but my children are too social and hands on for me to homeschool (plus I have decided it was not what I wanted to do) .
Thank you for reading my letter!”
Best regards,
- Louise, Walden, NY

“The premise is a good one for Orange County - the theme reflects characteristics that are present here and contrasts with what is being currently offered. I have been a county resident for twenty years, have raised three children and would like to see more choices for our students.”
- Veronica, Chester

“The agriculture and produce of Orange County, NY are some of the biggest contributions to the over-all good of New York State. Steeping children and families in the attitudes of productive rural thinking addresses the 21st century learning skills of entrepreneurship, creative thinking , and scientific investigations. The area public schools are missing this opportunity. By creating a charter school that is focused on these principles, as Orange County children begin their formal education, bodes well for shaping the future of all of us.”
- Jane, Warwick

“Providing alternate educational opportunities for the children of Orange County will benefit everyone as these children grow to adulthood.”
- Connie, Goshen

“I am very enthusiastic about this idea for the Warwick Community. The education of our children has been reduced to test results and critical thinking has been thrown out the window. In a world changing as rapidly as the one we live in skills in the Sciences are desperately needed!!!”
- Maureen, Warwick

“I am very interested in your application. I am a school administrator and I am not happy with the state of public education. Class sizes are increasing and best practices in teaching and learning are often not being implemented. I think this is happening for a variety of reasons, but in short, I want better for my children. They deserve to learn in an environment that is engaging and promotes the joy of learning without having to survive class sizes hovering around thirty. What a burden that is for them as well as the educators. When the application is complete and submitted, would you be willing to share it? I would like to understand your vision as a whole so as to determine if the setting would be appropriate for my children. Thank you for your time. If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.”
-Marie, Westtown

“I am very interested in this school and the concept of a rural charter school with a focus on environmentalism, even though my children are not of age yet to join. My biggest worry would be that the school might be too far from tuxedo! But I am very interested and would love to learn more about participating in the planning of what sounds like a wonderful school!”
- Miiriam, Tuxedo

“I have forward this to all my family members to sign up. I want this for my daughters and myself!!!”
- Arielle, Florida, NY

Sampling of Questions and responses from our website:

Question: “I am very excited about this Charter School. I do have a question about Charter Schools. Are there accommodations (like 504's), guidance counselors, special education in some subjects and other classes available to students just like in regular public schools?” - Janine

Response: For special ed or 504 students Warwick would still be the district that develops the IEP, but it would be up to the charter school to provide the services or contract out somewhere if necessary.

Side Note: Janine was asked to be on our Board of Trustees, and constantly provides us with valuable insight into the concerns of parents.

Question: How does the transportation for students work. Is there going to be a dress code or uniform like in the video. We are for the uniform idea or dress code.

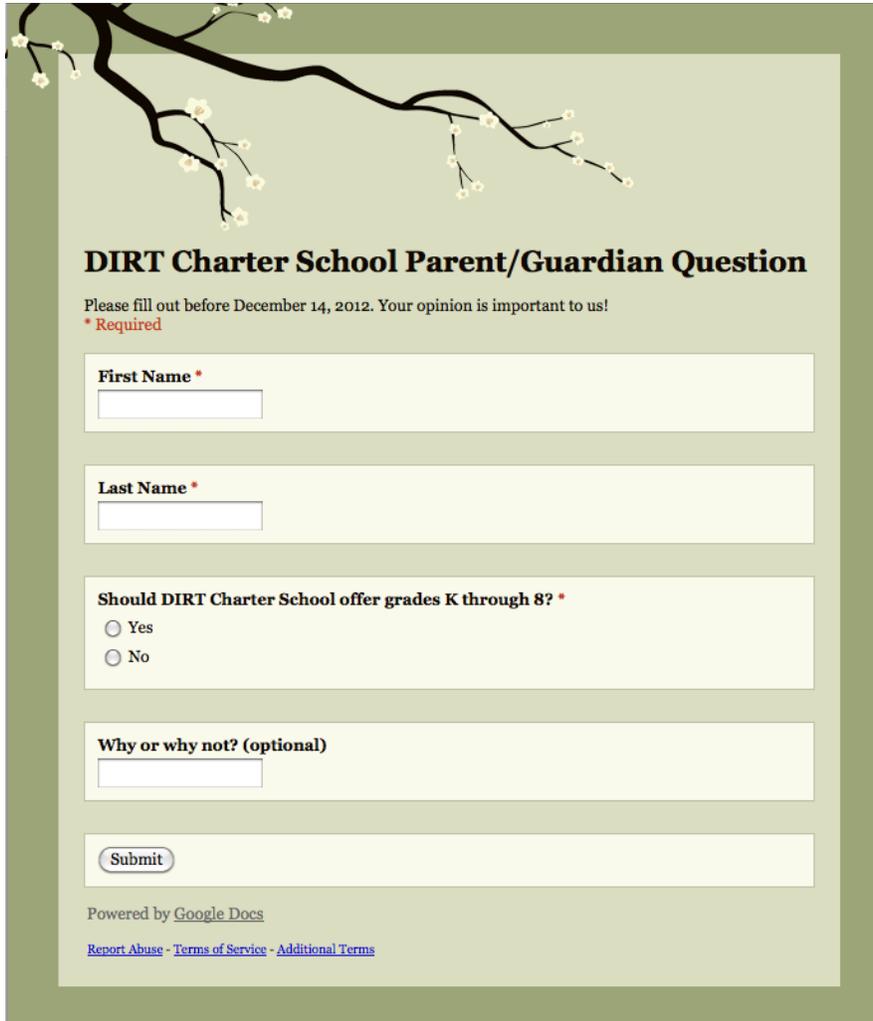
Response: Kids within a 15 mile radius of the schools location will be provided free transportation by their home school district, just like they would for a private school. Yes, we are definitely leaning towards a uniform like they have at Green Woods. We were also thinking khakis (maybe jeans on fridays) with t-shirts and sweatshirts with the schools logo on them.

Question: Would after care programs be available at the DIRT Charter School? Deborah

Response: Our school day goes until 4 and our after school enrichment program (optional) goes until 5. By January of the first year we will have the afterschool

enrichment program set up. Ideally we will have activities scheduled for 5 days a week in the the arts and sports. We haven't discussed an after care program, but if there's a substantial need for it, we could certainly add it.

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Online Survey



The image shows a screenshot of an online survey form. At the top, there is a decorative graphic of a tree branch with small white flowers. Below this, the title of the survey is "DIRT Charter School Parent/Guardian Question". Underneath the title, there is a message: "Please fill out before December 14, 2012. Your opinion is important to us!" followed by a red asterisk and the word "Required". The form contains several input fields: a text box for "First Name *", a text box for "Last Name *", a radio button selection for "Should DIRT Charter School offer grades K through 8? *" with options "Yes" and "No", a text box for "Why or why not? (optional)", and a "Submit" button. At the bottom of the form, it says "Powered by Google Docs" and provides links for "Report Abuse", "Terms of Service", and "Additional Terms".

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: Online Survey Response

We received 65 responses to our survey looking for input on the grade levels DIRT would offer. For the question “Should DIRT Charter School offer grades K through 8?”

- 94% marked Yes
- 6% marked No

Below is a sampling of comments that were also entered into the survey:

“The middle school years are critical to the growth and development of children. It is a time when they seek greater separation from parents and the influences can be strong. I think it would be a more difficult transition for students leaving DIRT at an earlier age (6th grade). I think they would be better served to continue to be nurtured and educated in a small, focused environment during

these important years prior to entering high school. We often begin to lose children at the middle school level. Well meaning parents and educators begin to give less guidance than is needed. We forget that these children may be 11 or 12 or 13, but they are ONLY 11, 12 or 13. Thank you for asking! Be well.” -Marie

“I love the idea of my daughter having that consistency during all of those formative years.”
- Allegra

“Middle school is the most important years and thats where public schools fall short and we loose great students due to the system.” - Liane

“All of my kids would be able to attend the school and have less transitions.” - Janine

“The longer they can attend a charter school, the better! I would be sending them there for an preferable education, so I would want it to be as long as possible” - Laurie

“In order for my children to have consistency with the learnings offered at DIRT - it would be MUCH better to have them go through school in ONE place until they reach High School.”
-Monica

“Middle school age is a terrible age to rejoin the local public school. It would be better if the kids stayed together until High school.” - Albert

“I think continuing along the path of education and resources, interdisciplinary learning and progressive thinking, would serve the students well and prepare them for a high school career where they would approach their subjects, fellow students and figures of authority with a greater, more inclusive and thoughtful background.” - Nora

“Of course ! It should be up until 12 grade! Children feel so displaced if all of a sudden they now have to go to another school . It's not right. Why not graduate from this charter?” - Louise

Attachment 2: Evidence of Public Review Process: DIRT Flier



What is a charter school?

A charter school is an independent public school. A group of people, such as educators, parents, community leaders, educational entrepreneurs or others, write the charter plan describing the school's guiding principles, governance structure, and applicable accountability measures. If the state approves the charter, the state funds the charter on a per pupil basis.

How many charter schools are there?

There are more than 4,900 charter schools in the U.S. that educate more than 1.7 million children. There are about 203 charter schools in New York State. 151 of those are in NYC and the rest are scattered around the other cities in NY.

Why are charter schools so popular?

Charter schools provide better opportunities for child-centered education and more educational choices for their children. Operators have the opportunity and incentive to create schools that provide new and better services to students.

How are charter schools funded?

Charter schools are public schools and like district public schools, they are funded according to enrollment, and receive funding from the district and the state according to the number of students attending. However, in a number of states, they do not receive the full equivalent of their district counterparts: New York charters only receive about 70% of a district school's total per-pupil allocation. Recent federal legislation provides grants to help charters with start-up costs.

What is the mission of the DIRT Charter School?

To provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

How do charter schools differ from traditional public schools?

Accountability: Charter schools are held accountable for how well they educate children in a safe and responsible environment, not for compliance with district and state regulations. They are judged on how well they meet the student achievement goals established by their charter, and how well they manage the fiscal and operational responsibilities entrusted to them. If they fail to deliver, they are closed.

Choice: Parents, teachers, community groups, organizations, or individuals interested in creating educational opportunities for children can start charter schools. Local and state school boards, colleges and universities, can sponsor them.

Autonomy: Charter schools are freed from the traditional bureaucracy and regulations that some feel divert a school's energy and resources toward compliance rather than excellence. Proponents of charter schools argue that educators can better focus their energy on setting and reaching high academic standards for their students.

Where will DIRT Charter School be located?

There are several locations under consideration in Southern Orange County, NY. Exact location to be determined based on charter approval and location availability at that time.

Want to learn more?

Visit www.dirtcharter.com and the NYS Dept. of Ed. Charter School Office at www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/



dirtcharterschool
developinginnovativeruralthinking
dirtcharter.com

Attachment 3a: Sample Daily Schedules

Typical Weekly Student Schedule for a K – 2 Student

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:30	Circle time, Welcoming Activities				
8:30 – 9:30	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
9:30 – 10:30	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing	Integrated Writing
(8:30 -10:30)	RTI & ELL for Some Students				
10:30–10:45	Snack & Social Time				
10:45 –11:45	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:45 -12:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:15–12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50 – 1:05	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds	Story-time, Read-alouds
1:05 - 2:35	Science or Social Studies Learning Lab				
2:35 - 3:15	Art	PE	Art	PE	Art
3:15 - 3:45	Spanish	Music	Spanish	Music	Spanish
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap Up				
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment

Typical Weekly Student Schedule for a Grade 3 – 5 Student

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:10	Welcoming Activities				
8:10 - 9:10	ELA (RTI & ELL for some students)				
9:10 – 9:50	Art	PE	Art	PE	Art
9:50–10:05	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:05-11:35	Science Learning Lab				
11:35-12:35	Integrated Writing				
12:35-1:05	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
1:05-1:35	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:35 – 2:35	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
2:35 – 3:15	Spanish	Music	Spanish	Music	Spanish
3:15 – 3:45	Social Studies Lab				
3:45 – 3:55	Wrap Up				
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	After-school Enrichment				

Typical Weekly Student Schedule for a Grade 6 - 8 Student

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 – 8:10	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
8:10 - 8:57	ELA 1 (Reading)				
8:59 - 9:46	ELA 2 (Writing)	ELA 2 (Writing)	ELA 2 (Writing)	ELA 2 (Writing)	ELA 2 (Writing)
9:48 - 10:35	Spanish	PE	Spanish	PE	Spanish
10:37 - 11:07	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
11:07 - 11:37	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:39 - 12:26	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
12:28 - 1:15	Social Studies Lab				
1:17 - 2:04	Music*	Music*	Music*	Music*	Music*
2:06 - 3:42	Science Learning Lab				
3:45 – 3:55	Pack Up				
3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 4:55	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment	After-school Enrichment

* Music would be every day for the first half of the year and then students would switch to Art for the second half of the year.

Weekly Teacher Schedule for Grades K – 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:55	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:00 – 8:30	Circle time, Welcoming Activities				
8:30 – 9:30	ELA (Reading)				
9:30-10:30	ELA (Writing)				
10:30-10:45	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:45-11:45	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
11:45-12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:50-1:05	Story-time	Story-time	Story-time	Story-time	Story-time
1:05-2:35	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab	Science/Social Studies Learning Lab
2:35 - 3:15	Students at Art/PE				
3:15 - 3:45	Students at Spanish/Music				
3:45 - 3:55	Wrap Up				
4:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00 - 5:00			Staff Meeting		

Indicates teacher break

Weekly Teacher Schedule for Grades 3 – 5

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:55	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:00 – 8:10	Welcoming Activities				
8:10 - 9:10	ELA (Reading)				
9:10 – 9:50	Students at Art/PE				
9:50–10:05	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:05-11:35	Science Learning Lab				
11:35-12:35	ELA (Writing)				
12:35-1:35	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:35–2:35	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
2:35–3:15	Students at Spanish/Music				
3:15–3:45	Social Studies Lab				
3:45–3:55	Wrap Up				
4:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00-5:00			Staff Meeting		

Indicates teacher break

Teacher Schedule for Grades 6 - 8

	ELA (2)	Math	Science (2)	Social Studies
7:55	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
8:00 – 8:10	Homeroom			
8:10 - 8:57	6th Grade			
8:59 - 9:46	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	7th Grade
9:48 - 10:35		7th Grade	8th Grade	7th Grade
10:37 - 11:07				
11:07 - 11:37	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:39 - 12:26		6th Grade		6th Grade
12:28 - 1:15	8th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	6th Grade
1:17 - 2:04	8th Grade		7th Grade	
2:06 - 2:53	7th Grade	8th Grade	6th Grade	8th Grade
2:55 - 3:42	7th Grade	8th Grade	6th Grade	8th Grade
3:45 - 3:55	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:00-5:00	Wed Staff Meeting	Wed Staff Meeting	Wed Staff Meeting	Wed Staff Meeting

Indicates teacher break

Attachment 3b: Proposed 2014 - 2015 School Calendar

DIRT Charter School
2014 - 2015

September				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

October				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

November				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	7	8
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

December				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

January				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

August 26-30 Staff Dev.

September 1 Labor Day
2 First Day
25 Rosh Hashanah

October 13 Columbus Day

November 11 Veteran's Day
27-28 Thanksgiving

December 22-31 Winter Break

January 1-2 Winter Break
19 MLK Day

February 13-16 Presidents Day

April 3-10 Spring Break

May 25 Memorial Day

June 19 Last Day

184 School Days
- 4 Snow Days
180 School Days

Make up days if necessary will begin with February 13, then June 22, then June 23

February				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

March				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

April				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
28	29	30		

May				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

June				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

Attachment 4: Student Discipline Policy

Mission: The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

Ways “to be” at DIRT Charter School:

- Be respectful
- Be safe
- Be a happily engaged learner.

DIRT’s Commitment to Excellence:

1. **Timeliness** – We will arrive every day by 7:55 A.M. and remain at school until 4:00 P.M.
2. **High Quality Education** – We will do whatever it takes to respect, appreciate, and nurture every students’ creativity, knowledge, and character as we prepare them for life.
3. **Communication** – We promise to communicate regularly with parents or guardians about their child’s progress and make ourselves available in person and by phone. We will return parent phone calls within 24 hours. We will conduct ourselves respectfully and professionally in our communications. When students are disciplined or deserve recognition for their accomplishments, we will inform their parents promptly.
4. **Homework** – We will assign productive, worthwhile homework to reinforce and support skills and concepts learned in class.
5. **Fairness** – We will address all issues consistently and fairly.
6. **Safety** – We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals.

Parent/Guardian Commitment:

1. **Attendance** – We will make sure our child comes to school every day. We will make every effort to schedule doctor’s appointments, vacations, etc. for days when school is not in session. We understand that there will be consequences for multiple absences.
2. **Timeliness** – We will make sure our child arrives at school every day on time (by 8:00 A.M.). We will make sure to promptly pick up our child at the end of the school day (3:55 P.M.) or allow them to take the bus at dismissal.
3. **Support & Homework** – We will provide a quiet space at home for our child to study. We will check our child’s homework every night. We will make sure our child gets enough sleep each night. We will do whatever it takes for our child to learn and perform to his/her optimal ability.
4. **Communication** – We will make ourselves available to our child and the school, and respond to any concerns they might have. We will return phone calls from the school within 24 hours. If we are asked to attend a meeting regarding our child’s education or behavior, we will attend. If we have any concerns we will raise them with someone at the school. We will promptly inform the school if our address and/or phone number changes.

We will conduct ourselves respectfully and professionally in our communications.

5. **Dress Code** – We will make sure our child follows the DIRT Charter dress code every day.

Student Commitment:

1. **Ways “to be”** - I will be respectful, safe, and be a happily engaged learner.
2. **Work Hard** – I will work hard and do my best every day.
3. **Homework** – I will do my homework every night and ask my teacher if I need help.
4. **Directions** – I will follow the directions of my parents and all of the adults at school and on the bus.
5. **Choices** – I will use appropriate behavior and language at all times.

Dress Code: DIRT Charter School has a primary objective of developing a community of learners. A uniform is a unifying factor within our school and a visible signature of our school to the larger community. Uniforms also allow parents to save money by not having to buy an entire wardrobe of school clothing and they minimize learning distractions in the school. The school uniform will also help ensure the safety of DIRT’s students.

While DIRT will identify an inexpensive uniform provider, it understands that all families may not be able to afford the uniform. No student will be denied access to the school because of an inability to purchase the school uniform. The school will keep reserves on hand to assist families who cannot afford the uniform.

DIRT Charter School Uniform: Our school uniform will be the same for girls and boys and will consist of:

- DIRT shirt
- DIRT sweatshirt (in colder weather)
- Khaki Slacks (Jeans on Fridays)
- Sneakers or hiking shoes

The following dress code guidelines apply to all students:

1. Students will wear the DIRT Charter School Uniform every day.
2. All pants must fit around the waist. Belts of an appropriate size and nature should be worn if necessary.
3. Pants may not be excessively baggy or inappropriately tight and may not cover the shoes.
4. Students may not wear jogging pants, sweat pants or shorts. Shorts are permitted if the weather is above 75 degrees and must be of appropriate length (exceeding the tips of students fingers when arms are at the sides).
5. Students may not wear skirts, or dresses as we will be outdoors often.
6. Students may not wear hats, caps, or other head coverings in the school (except in the case of religious observance).
7. For safety reasons the following jewelry will not be permitted at DIRT: necklaces (outside of shirt), loose bracelets, and dangle earrings (studs are permitted).
8. Students may not wear makeup, sparkles or glitter, or fake fingernail tips.
9. For safety reasons students cannot wear flip flops or sandals.

Code of Conduct: DIRT Charter School has very high expectations for student behavior and a strict code of conduct to ensure students act appropriately at all times and are always within a

safe, structured environment. The school takes a preventive and pro-active approach to discipline to ensure that students behave properly and that there are no obstacles to learning. Each teacher and staff person will be encouraged to keep a log regarding any discipline issues. Consequences are designed to help students recognize negative behavior, teach them alternative choices, and protect other members of the community from disruptions or danger. There is a range of possible consequences for violating school rules depending on the severity of the infraction or the logical consequence within the given situation; these consequences may include:

- **Verbal Warning:** Students are informed that their conduct is not conducive to learning and are warned not to continue the conduct. Continuing the conduct will result in more severe consequences.
- **Time Out:** Students take a “time out” by going to a designated part of the room or to another classroom to complete their assigned work. This gives a student time to get back on track and think briefly about their actions. The length of a time out varies from grade to grade and is also based on the severity of the behavior.
- **Parent Contact:** Teachers will call, e-mail or write to family members to inform them of their child’s behavior and the consequence and to discuss appropriate strategies that can be used both at school and at home.
- **Lunch/Recess Detention:** Teachers keep students in their classroom during the lunch/recess period. Students may be required to complete written reflections, complete missed work or make up for their behavior by doing some form of community service during this time.
- **Reparations:** In order to reinforce the idea that negative behavior affects others, students may be asked to compensate those affected by their negative behavior, or “fix” the situation. For example, a student may be required to clean or paint over vandalism or replace damaged property that he/she caused.
- **Office Referral:** If a student repeatedly disrupts the learning environment, the student may be removed from class and referred to an administrator.
- **Parent Conference/Conversations:** Teachers and/or administrators will be communicating on a regular basis via phone, email or by meeting to make sure that all parties are aware of issues and are working together to solve the problem.
- **Loss of Privileges:** Students who continue to exhibit negative behaviors will face the loss of privileges, including access to extra-curricular programs, field trips, special events and ceremonies.
- **In-School Suspension:** DIRT may require students to serve an in-school suspension during which they are not allowed to spend the day as members of their class communities. In-school suspensions are determined by the Principal and are used only for serious or persistent infractions of school rules. Students, who have received an in-school suspension, must spend the school day supervised by a staff member in one of the school offices doing their schoolwork.
- **Out of School Suspension:** The DIRT principal will suspend students from school for serious breaches of the Code of Conduct. Parents or guardians will be informed and suspensions will be recorded in student’s records. In the event that a child is suspended, an alternative instructional setting will be established as soon as possible, no later than the day after the suspension is effective. The school staff involved shall make reasonable efforts to verify facts and statements prior to recommending suspension.
 - Short Term Suspension: A short-term suspension is defined as an suspension of 5

- days or less.
- Long Term Suspension: A long-term suspension is defined as an in-school or out-of school suspension of more than 5 days.
- **Expulsion:** An expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the school. The DIRT principal will expel students from school for the most serious breaches of the Code of Conduct. Parents or guardians will be informed and expulsions will be recorded in student's records.

Below is a list of possible infractions and their potential consequences. This list is not exhaustive and teachers and staff can supplement these rules with their own rules for classes and events. All discipline will take into account the history, specific context and severity of the negative behavior. In addition, violations of the Code of Conduct and consequences are subject to the discretion of the Principal and may be adjusted accordingly. Finally, any breaches of state or federal law may be handled in cooperation with the police or other authorities.

Level 1

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calling out an answer ● Being off-task ● Rolling eyes or other minor disrespectful behavior ● Failing to be in school uniform and/or violating the dress code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Warning/reprimand by school staff ● Student is reminded of appropriate behavior and task at hand ● Student is provided with productive alternative choices that should be made

Level 2

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeating a Level 1 infraction ● Being unprepared for class (which includes but is not limited to failing to bring pencil, not completing homework, etc...) ● Failing to follow directions ● Failing to complete work ● Arriving late to school/class and/or violating school attendance policy ● Disrupting class or educational process in any way at any time (which includes but is not limited to making excessive noise in a classroom, failing to participate, refusing to work with partners, etc...) ● Failing to be in one's assigned place on school premises ● Getting out of your seat without permission ● Going to the bathroom without permission ● Making noise in the hallways, or common spaces without permission ● Inappropriate noise levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is reminded of appropriate behavior ● Student is given a verbal warning ● Student is given a "Time Out" within the classroom ● Removal from classroom for "Time Out" outside of the classroom ● Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally ● Call home to parents ● Student-Parent-Teacher conference ● Student-Parent-Administrator conference ● In-school disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, school events, trips, or other activities) ● Verbal or written apology to community ● In-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Other consequences/responses deemed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving the recess area without permission • Engaging in unsafe behavior, failing to use recess equipment properly, or failing to follow directions during recess • Excluding classmates in games/activities during recess • Using school equipment (i.e. computers, faxes, phones) without permission • Bringing electronic equipment to school without school authorization (which includes but is not limited to cell phones, game systems, ipods, headphones, etc...) • Littering on school grounds • Verbally disrespecting a fellow student (which includes but is not limited to teasing, name calling, being rude, mocking, etc...) • Verbally disrespecting faculty, staff, or other school community members (which includes but is not limited to being rude, disobeying instructions, etc...) 	<p>appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period or expulsion)</p>
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Level 3

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating a Level 2 infraction • Disrespecting a fellow student using profanity, racial slurs, or any foul or discriminatory language • Disrespecting a faculty or staff member using profanity, racial slurs, or any foul or discriminatory language • Disobeying or defying school staff or any school authority/personnel • Using profane, obscene, lewd, abusive, or discriminatory language or gestures • Posting or distributing inappropriate materials (which includes but is not limited to unauthorized materials, defamatory or libelous materials, or threatening materials) • Violating the school's Internet policy (which includes but is not limited to using the Internet for purposes not related to school or non-educational purposes or which result in security/privacy violations. • Forgery of any kind • Lying or providing false or misleading information to school personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent to Principal's office • Loss of classroom/school privileges • Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally • Call home to parents • Removal from classroom for "Time Out" outside of the classroom • Student-Parent-Administrator Conference • In-School disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or other activities) • Verbal or written apology to community • In-school suspension (possibly immediate) • Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate) • Other consequences/responses deemed appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period) • Expulsion

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engaging in any academic dishonesty (which includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, copying another's work) ● Tampering with school records or school documents/materials by any method ● Falsely activating a fire alarm or other alarm ● Misusing other people's property ● Vandalizing school property or property belonging to staff, students, or others ● Stealing or knowingly possessing property belonging to another person without proper authorization ● Smoking ● Gambling ● Throwing any objects inappropriately ● Engaging in inappropriate or unwanted physical contact ● Fighting or engaging in physically aggressive behavior of any kind (which includes but is not limited to play fighting, horsing around, shoving, pushing, or any unwanted or aggressive physical contact) ● Leaving class, school activity, or school premises without school authorization ● Repeatedly failing to show up to class or school 	
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Level 4

Infractions	Range of Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeating a Level 3 Infraction ● Repeated in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions ● Exhibiting blatant and repeated disrespect for school code, policies, community, or culture ● Destroying or attempting to destroy school property ● Engaging in intimidation, bullying, harassment, coercion, or threatening violence, injury, or harm to others ● Engaging in behavior which creates a substantial risk of or results in injury/assault against any member of the school community ● Engaging in sexual, racial, or any other type of harassment ● Possessing, transferring, or using alcohol, other drugs or controlled substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sent to Principal/school administrator ● Loss of classroom/school privileges ● Additional assignments which require student to reflect on behavior in writing or orally ● Call home to parents ● Removal from classroom or "Time Out" outside of the classroom ● Student-Parent-Administrator Conference ● In-school disciplinary action (which includes but is not limited to exclusion from recess, communal lunch, enrichment activities, sports, school events, trips, or other activities) ● Verbal or written apology to community ● In-school suspension (possibly immediate) ● Out-of-school suspension (possibly immediate)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in an incident of group violence • Possessing a weapon • Charged with or convicted of a felony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other consequences/responses deemed appropriate by school (including but not limited to extended suspension for a fixed period) • Expulsion
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Disciplinary Procedures and Due Process: Parents will be notified of all consequences that involve removing students from class, activities or the school. Students will be told of all charges against them and be provided with the opportunity to describe their side of the story. The principal shall consider this explanation prior to taking disciplinary action. For minor infractions parents may be merely notified and/or a conference requested to assist in resolving the situation. For more serious issues that involve removal of the student from participation in the school, parents will be notified and have opportunities to discuss and appeal the disciplinary action. In cases where the student has committed a crime or violation of local, state or federal law, law enforcement authorities will be notified.

Suspension: When the school proposes suspending a student, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately or as soon as possible by telephone. If the school has the parent/guardian's email address, notification will be provided by email. The notice will include the reason(s) for the proposed suspension, the proposed duration of the suspension and whether the proposed suspension will be in-school or out-of-school. The notice will also advise the parent/guardian that he/she will have the opportunity to request a conference with the Principal. At the conference, the student and parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to deny or explain the charges, to present his/her own evidence. A decision will be issued after the conference. The principal will also advise the parent/guardian and the student of the student's right to a formal hearing at which he/she may be represented by counsel, cross-examine witnesses against him/her, and present witnesses and evidence of his/her own. If the student or his/her parent/guardian will be represented by counsel at the hearing, notice must be provided to the Principal no less than 2 days before the hearing. The Principal or a delegate will preside over the hearing and all members of the staff who were involved in witnessing the alleged discipline violation are required to participate. A decision by the Principal will stand as the final decision regarding the student's long-term suspension status, though the student's family has the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Expulsion: In the case of conduct which in the school's judgment warrants expulsion, the student may be subjected to a short or long-term suspension first. If the Principal decides that an infraction warrants expulsion, a hearing as described above will be held. Based on that hearing, the Principal will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, which will make the final decision. That decision may be appealed to the Board. If the school expels a student, the school will cooperate with any school to which the student seeks to enroll, including providing the receiving school with all relevant information regarding the student's academic performance and student records, upon request of the school or parent/guardian.

Students with Disabilities: The school's disciplinary policy, in regarding any student with a disability, will be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), its implementing regulations and applicable New York State law respecting students with disabilities. The school will cooperate with the Committee on Special Education (CSE) of the student's district of residence as necessary to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Generally, a student with, or suspected of having, a disability may be disciplined in the same manner as his/her

non-disabled peers as set forth above. A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to an infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for consideration.

Alternative Instruction: Students who are suspended will be provided with alternative instruction. Arrangements will be made between the school and each individual family on a case-by-case basis. Alternative instruction by qualified staff will be offered within 24 hours of any suspension. Such instruction can be at a location and time of the school's choosing, so long as each is reasonable and the student has notice of it. A suspended student will be assigned to alternative instruction for direct instruction for a minimum of one hour per day. The school can choose to provide tutoring to a suspended student at the school, the student's home or some other reasonably accessible location, either during the school day or before or after school hours. The quality of the instruction will be designed to allow the student to keep pace with school work, receive all assignments and assessments, and generally advance with the curriculum. In addition, when appropriate, the student may be assigned a project designed to address the conduct that gave rise to the suspension. During long-term suspensions, the school may also seek to place the student, during the term of the suspension, in any alternate education program that is operated by the student's school district of residence.

For a student who has been expelled by the school, the means and manner of alternative instruction will be the same as for a student who has been suspended. Alternative instruction will be provided until the student is enrolled at another accredited school, or otherwise participating in an accredited program, including any alternative education program operated by the student's school district of residence, to the extent the provision of such services is required by law. As above, the school may seek, where appropriate, to place the student in an alternative education program operated by the student's school district of residence.

Bus Policy: Appropriate behavior on school buses is necessary at all times to make transportation safe and efficient; therefore, misconduct on the bus will not be tolerated. The following system is in place in the event a student does not behave properly on the bus:

- 1st incident: a warning is issued
- 2nd incident: the student will not be allowed to use the bus for one day
- 3rd incident: the student will not be allowed to use the bus for an entire school week
- 4th incident: the student will be prohibited from using the bus.

Gun-Free Schools: Federal and state law require expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year for a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to the school, or to have possessed a firearm at school, except that the Principal may modify such expulsion requirement for a student on a case-by-case basis. "Weapon" as used in this law includes firearms and explosives. The principal shall refer a student who has been determined to have brought a weapon or firearm to school to a presentment agency for a juvenile delinquency proceeding. Any action taken by criminal justice or juvenile agencies will be in addition to, and independent of, discipline imposed by a school.

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Kristy Apostolides

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Kristy Apostolides

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23 Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member, Outreach Team, Curriculum Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity

as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I began looking for local opportunities in my field (sustainable agriculture education) and came across the DIRT charter school effort. After contacting the organizers they suggested I join the development team.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

By working to create the DIRT Charter School, I hope to improve educational the opportunities for children beyond what is currently available within the local public school system.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

Yes: *In 2005-2008 and again in 2010-2013, I was on the board (termed International Committee) of URGENCI, an international organization formed to educate about community supported agriculture.*

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes.

If your answer is yes, please indicate the precise nature of your relationship here:

We have been working together to develop the application and recruit community interest and input to form the DIRT Charter school.

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in

response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or

the benefit of their friends and family.

I would bring the issue to attention of the other board members in order to develop a plan to investigate this possibility and seek corrective action, if needed.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential, and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

The school will expand the current standard core curriculum and enhance the learning of its students through hands-on and exploratory learning opportunities, through the lens of sustainability.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school will meet the needs of the communities it serves by providing an alternative and attractive learning environment for its students. Students, parents and teachers will work together to enhance, expand, and support the children's' interest and enthusiasm toward school and learning in general. The board will need to consistently and conscientiously evaluate and the needs, successes and struggles the charter school faces in order to ensure the goal of providing an educational environment for its students that fosters learning, creative and critical thinking and therefore encourages high academic achievement and interest. This includes recruiting and hiring talented teachers, developing opportunities for strong parental involvement in the school, managing and enhancing (through fundraising) the budgetary needs of the school, and working towards the goals outlined in the charter agreement.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

In addition to the above, a public charter school board member should provide guidance and support to the employees of the school and act as a resource to plan the objectives to meet the goals set forth in the school's mission.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I have read and I understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

I believe my experience serving on the board of an international organization, and often playing the role of the 'cultural translator' to help everyone overcome differences of cultural perspectives, as well as my background in community organizing and project development, will prove useful in the developmental stages of the charter school. Additionally, my formal training in sustainable agriculture and experience in training individuals in organic production, enhance the overall qualifications of the board to build a strong team of charter school employees.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Kristy Apostolides (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



March 3, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

Kristy Apostolides

Education and Training

- **M.Sc. – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, Crete, Greece.** Sustainable Agriculture. November 2008
- **Junior Fellow, Nonprofit Leadership Development Institute, United Way of New York:** Strategic Planning, Budgets and Accounting, Board Development, Government Relations, Management, Human Resources, Performance Measurements. September – December 2004
- **B.Sc. – College of Agriculture and Life Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.** Plant Sciences. Concentration: Botany. May 1999

Work Experience

2009-10 **Coordinator, International Projects and Researcher**
Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, Sustainable Agriculture
Crete, Greece

International Projects:

- Directing multiple projects from start to end: defining scope, tactics and project work plans
- Preparing and conducting quality assurance and evaluation procedures and applying them according to changing needs and requirements
- Liaising with partners and grantors as necessary to meet project goals
- Reviewing deliverables before submission to partners or grantors
- Developing communication, financial, and reporting methodologies for all coordinated projects and internally for all projects
- Compiling status reports for project achievements required by grantors
- Managing and supervising project team

Research and Development:

- Exploring opportunities for new research or extension projects from concept to proposal submission
- Representing organization for partnership development in order to implement new projects
- Researching appropriate funding sources
- Preparing written proposal including project objectives, deliverables, partner roles, and budgets to support new project activities
- Supervising MSc students as appropriate to experience and need

Achievements

- Successfully crafted one and 'shortlisted' for two grant proposals to the European Community totaling over €2 million.
- Developed needs analysis protocol, drafted guidelines and wrote results report for all projects

2007-8 **Writing/Editing Consultant**

- Editing existing and composing new content for sustainabletable.org website
- Developing project ideas, composing and editing grant proposals to European Community in support of Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania future projects

2006 Development Consultant

- Event planning and volunteer management for Connecticut Farmland Trust fundraiser
- Reporting and troubleshooting for Just Food's Americorps*VISTA program

**2005 Volunteer Program Director
Mediterranean Association for Soil Health, Crete, Greece**

- Surveying farmers and volunteers to determine labor needs of farmers and learning objectives of volunteers

Achievements

- Developed database of interested farmers for participation in volunteer network
- Initiated contact with universities and individuals for volunteer participation
- Developed strategic plan for program start and expansion

**2002-5 CSA in NYC Program Manager
Just Food, New York, New York**

- Providing ongoing training, technical assistance and troubleshooting to city groups and farmers initiating CSA sites
- Providing technical assistance to organizations throughout the United States to facilitate CSA Program replication
- Develop and refine creative ways to make more local food accessible to individuals of varied income levels
- Evaluating and refining the CSA program, including training program and materials
- Supervising CSA Program staff
- Recruiting and supervising interns and VISTA members
- Publicizing the CSA program through city-wide media outlets
- Organizing the CSA in NYC conference
- Exploring new ways to get more local food into New York City and developing organizational partnerships as a result

Achievements

- Successfully partnered and trained 28 community based organizations and 13 local farmers to start 28 Community Supported Agriculture sites in NYC
- Created and implemented a CSA in NYC Start-up Training Program and accompanying manual (CSA in NYC Toolkit)
- Developed CSA City Advisory Team
- Created and implemented several successful outreach strategies for locating new community organizations and farmers
- Organized three CSA in NYC Conferences with record-breaking attendance
- Designed successful internship program for Community Food Education Program
- Produced Veggie TipSheet Book
- Wrote successful grant resulting in \$8,000 of in-kind support from Adobe Systems, Inc.
- Represented the organization at conferences and workshops throughout the United States
- Collaborated with United Way's HPNAP Program, Community Food Resource Center, and City Harvest to develop Institutional CSA purchasing programs for emergency food providers in NYC
- With Heifer International, developed evaluation procedures for CSA in NYC Program

**2002-5 Just Food Americorps*VISTA Program Director
Just Food, New York, New York**

- Training and supervision of Americorps*VISTA host site staff
- Consultation and guidance for Americorps*VISTA members
- Collecting and compiling quarterly reports
- Ongoing evaluation of site supervisors

Achievements

- Developed City Advisory Committee to refine and enhance Americorps*VISTA Program
- Wrote successful renewal grants to raise over \$250,000 of in-kind support from Americorps*VISTA program
- Expanded Americorps*VISTA program to incorporate other programs of the organization
- Developed strategy to ensure continuous support from Americorps*VISTA

**2001-2 Food Policy Intern, Holcomb Farm CSA Intern
Hartford Food System, Hartford, Connecticut**

- Connecticut Food Policy Council CT Farm Map subcommittee: Organized and collaborated efforts of the Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of Agriculture and designer for the creation of a CT Agricultural Road Map; Coordinating meetings; Primary officer in charge of creating and maintaining database for participating agribusiness; Authored copy to appear on reverse side of map; Responsible for proofing drafts of completed project
- City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy: Responsible for meeting coordination, minutes, and other duties as needed
- Working Lands Alliance: Staff for the CT Farmland Preservation Trust: Responsible for performing research, meeting coordination, minutes, and other duties as needed
- Hartford Food System: Design and creation of various outreach efforts; Drafting of letters; Contributing writer for yearly newsletter; Responsible for maintaining all local network software and troubleshooting on individual workstations; Design, construction, and maintenance of organization web site; Other duties as needed
- Holcomb Farm CSA: Performing daily activities necessary for the successful operation of an organic CSA farm

Achievements

- Produced a widely distributed tourist road map of Connecticut to increase visits to area retail farms
- Created manual for the maintenance of organization website
- Took part in a team that produced over 300,000 lbs of fresh, organic produce

**1999-2000 Office of Finances & Operations, Assistant; Office Manager; Network Administrator
Nonprofit Finance Fund, New York, New York**

- Tracking bank transactions; proofing budget data and balance sheets for all sites of program operation
- Primary officer in charge of invoicing and tracking loan repayments and preparation of loan amortization schedules
- Performing general office managerial tasks; hiring and supervision of support staff
- Responsible for maintaining and updating all local network applications; troubleshooting on individual workstations

Publications

Investigating a Paradigm of Food System Sustainability: The Case of Fresh Vegetable Production and Distribution in Crete. Book of Abstracts, 113th European Association of Agricultural Economists Seminar: *A resilient European food industry and food chain in a challenging world.* Chania, Crete, Greece. September 3-6, 2009. [Based on MSc Thesis, available here: www.tinyurl.com/apostolides-thesis]

Veggie TipSheet Book, Just Food, March 2005

Developed topics, compiled, organized, illustrated, and drafted and edited content for instructional manual providing information about how to best store and prepare fresh produce received through CSA.

CSA in NYC Toolkit, Just Food, March 2003

Developed topics, compiled, organized, drafted and edited content for training manual providing detailed instructions on how to start a CSA project in New York City.

CT Tourist Farm Map, CT Department of Agriculture and CT Department of Transportation

HangingOut in England. Balliett and Fitzgerald, IDG Books Worldwide. June 2001

Performed field research and authored approximately 250 pages of guidebook to the UK

Liberty Travel, www.libertytravel.com, 2000-2001

Performed research and authored copy for assigned destinations published on company web site

Professional Affiliations

Journal of Agriculture and Food Systems Community Development (JAFSCD)

Member Editorial Committee, 2009-2011

URGENCI, International Network to Generate Commitment between Urban and Rural Citizens

Member Executive Committee, 2005-2008, 2010-2013

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Janine Bloom

<p style="text-align: center;">School Trustee Background Information</p>

Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Janine Bloom

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member, Outreach Team, Building Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

In January 2012 I was hearing a lot of talk about the possible start up of the charter school in our community. At the time, I had no knowledge of what a charter school was and how it was different from regular public schools. I then did what any proactive parent would do, I Googled "what is a charter school?" The more I read about it the more excited I became to have this awesome opportunity of choice for our children. I went onto DIRT Charter's website and signed up all my children on the perspective list and wrote an email stating my excitement in support of the charter and my wish to help out and be involved in any way that I can! I then was ecstatic to hear of an informational meeting on the new proposed charter school being held in our community. I showed up to the meeting one hour early to ensure a good seat and to gather more information and get my list of questions answered.

My excitement continues to grow as our mission, dream and vision of the charter grows. Possibly because of my enthusiastic support and loyal involvement, I was approached and asked if I would like to be a prospective board member. After researching what it meant to be a board member, I concluded it would be ideal for me because the dreams and visions this DIRT Charter school aspires to provide for the children are the same that I aspire for mine.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

A well-rounded anything proves to be more successful. As there are many prospective board members who are certified educators with years of experience in their field, I feel that my life skills as a parent of four children will prove to be a great asset. I want the best for my children and my community's children. I strongly feel that all children are our greatest assets and that they deserve the best education we can offer them. By being involved in becoming a board member I would aspire to see to it that this vision is met and executed. Having reviewed the mission of the dirt charter school, I wholeheartedly feel that it is exemplary and that it will address important and essential criteria that are or may be otherwise missing in our children's education.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

This does not apply to me.

As a parent with two special-needs children I have had five years experience in advocating for my children within our school district. Therefore, I feel it would be comforting for such parents to know there is someone on the board with experience in this area and I could, if needed, advocate for other children as I have done for my own.

Besides having four young children I have been a New York State certified EMT working and volunteering for my community. And with this, I have added experience in the field of safety and first aid which I could incorporate where applicable into any plans for the charter school.

I have as a Girl Scout leader, PTA parent, 4-H parent, drama club group leader, Little League coach and head cheerleading coach, employed organizational skills and psychology to make activities and performances by and for the children fun and rewarding as well as successful.

In addition, I have implemented and organized successful fund-raising events with various missions to improve and benefit the community, to support community members in need, and, to ensure the ongoing success of various organizations (e.g., Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Warwick Little League, Pine Island Community Public Park, Mentsch Makers Pre-School, CDA Xtreme Cheerleading and the Pulaski Fire Department's Ladies Auxiliary).

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *Both my family and I have known Christina Pahucki, Marlene Caraballo, Tracy Pietrzak, and their families for a few years now. We are all part of a small community and our children of similar ages all attended the same school. Upon becoming more involved in the DIRT charter school, I grew to know them on a more professional level. As of recently, my husband just became aware that he knows of Paul Ruszkiewicz from our community, but not in a familiar sense.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including

but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

The procedures laid out in the charter school's Conflict of Interest Policy would guide my actions. If there is good cause to believe a member of the board has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, I would inform that member of the basis for my belief and afford him/her an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board determines the member has

failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, we would take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.
The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential, and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.
DIRT Charter will be using the environmental science as a basis to educate and prepare its students to meet and/or supersede the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. I had an excitingly eye-opening opportunity to experience the execution of this kind of program first hand in a visit to a charter school in Pennsylvania with a similar mission to ours. It was such a magnificent learning experience to see how each and every student there just sucked in all the information being put out to them, understood it, were excited about it and eager to learn more!

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe, that in order for DIRT Charter's success, there needs to be diversity among the board members, a very strong vision for the present and future of the charter and members of the board who are passionate in and for the success of the school and it's students.

In order to achieve the above, I feel that the board members need to have a line of communication open to the parents with the opportunity to allow for change (in the structure) where improvements are needed and or desired for the benefit of the students.

There should be a plan in place to ensure that all board members serve with the utmost integrity, honesty, and selflessness. There should be scheduled, anonymous evaluations of board members, teachers and all school staff.

There should be someone qualified and appointed for the sole purpose of grant writing and fundraising, with certain and specific expectations that must be met.

There should also be the opportunity to add/terminate board members if, and, as needed.

The board needs to provide the flexibility within the charter's mission to evolve as new concepts, technology and curriculums become evident.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

As a public charter school board member, we are always in the eyes of the public. Anything we say or do will be seen as a reflection of our character and of the charter. There is a level of professionalism that should always be adhered to and upheld.

Private and personal information which board members may be made privy to, in connection with the charter school, should at no time be brought up with anyone other than a current board member and then, only if such information is pertinent to that member of the board.

Charter school board members are there to oversee and ensure the mission is being upheld in the following ways:

- *Finances are being used and awarded efficiently and appropriately.*
- *The curriculum is properly and effectively being implemented.*
- *Students are performing to the expectations of their grade level and if they are not, why, what changes need to be made, and, execute them.*
- *The teachers are effectively and appropriately meeting the goals set by the board.*
- *Provide a nonbiased vote/opinion on all matters pertaining to the school.*
- *The Charter School's bylaws are being implemented/upheld.*

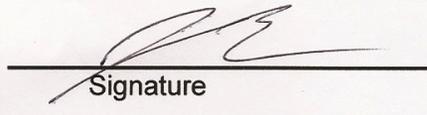
Furthermore, everyone involved in the school should have and uphold, as their primary concern and motivation, the best interest for the education and welfare of the students in the forefront of all matters relevant to the school that come before them.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies. I affirm.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Janine Bloom (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



Signature

March 3, 2013

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

RESUME

Janine Bloom

EDUCATION

1993-1997 HS Diploma, Monroe Woodbury HS
2001 Certified in First Aid and CPR with the Chester Volunteer Ambulance Corps
2002 New York State Certified EMT-B
2006 Medical Billing Certificate from Orange County Community College
2006 Medical Terminology Certificate from Orange County Community College

QUALIFICATIONS

2003-PRESENT Stay-at-home mother, birthing and raising four children (two with special needs) and managing the logistics of the household, including budget, diet, medical care, management, upkeep, caretaking, and much more

AWARDS AND LEADERSHIP

St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital Lifesaver Award (2002). Girl Scout Leader; PTA Member; 4-H Parent; Head Cheerleading Coach; Drama Club Group Leader; Special-Needs advocate (for my two children); fund-raising (including: Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Warwick Little League, Pine Island Community Public Park and the Pulaski Fire Department's Ladies Auxiliary).

EMPLOYMENT

2002-Feb.—2002-May Mobile Life Support Services, Inc.
EMT-B and Ambulance Driver
Basic Life Support, responsible for ambulance & documentation

2001 — 2001-July Highland Ophthalmology Associates, LLC
Ophthalmic Medical Assistant and Front Desk Receptionist
Transcription, patient consults, assisting Dr. with minor surgical procedures

1999 — 2000 ZALES Diamond Outlet
Full time sales associate & key holder
Open and close the store, inventory, register, bank deposits, etc...

1998 — 1999 Maximum Pet'Tential
Manager
Open and close the store, daily budget, bookkeeping, banking, writing checks, researching products and advising salespersons

Full employer details in attached References sheet.

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Kate Eicher

School Trustee Background Information
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Kate Eicher

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member, Curriculum Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

Through word of mouth and attending an information session.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I seek to assist the success of the school by upholding the mission and vision of the charter and getting the community invested and involved. I want to be sure the charter provides our children an education that exceeds standards, so that they develop into life-long engaged learners who value their place within their community.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board.

This does not apply to me.

I report and serve a Steering Committee for a Farmers' Market but do not hold a position on the board. While attending Montclair State University, I served as a member of Student Government.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *We have been working together on the charter application.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does

business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

I would seek further inquiry and propose to remove them from the board.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

To develop life-long, eagerly engaged learners, who are invested in their local and global community, through a unique environmentally based education program.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

The school will provide an integrated learning environment focusing on environmental sciences and the arts, utilizing hands on learning. Students will exceed academic standards, reaching their full academic and developmental potential through interdisciplinary project-based learning, which will foster creative and critical thinking skills, and encourage students to become effective participants in their community.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school maintains high standards for both teachers and students through supportive, organized, and effective leadership that keeps the mission and values of the school as its focus. Establishing and maintaining excellent communication and cooperation between the charter school administration, teachers, parents, students, and community is essential.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

Board members should support the mission and philosophy of the charter school through the establishment and support of effective administration, teachers, and programs. They must uphold the laws and regulations set by the Department and should make decisions that are financially and ethically sound. Maintaining excellent communication with administration, teachers, parents, and the community is crucial. I also feel training is important for the role of a board member in the guidelines of being a board member, the rules and regulations of the Department, and in the educational philosophy of the charter school, so that they can best uphold the mission of the charter.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

Yes, I have.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

As a parent, active community member, and former educator, I am honored to be a part

of this exciting opportunity. I feel strongly that this unique environmentally based program is craved in our agricultural area and would greatly benefit not only our students, but our community as a whole.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Kate Eicher (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



March 3, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Home Address: _____

Kate Eicher

EDUCATION 7/00—12/03
Bank Street College of Education—New York, NY
Graduate Coursework

9/97—5/99
New York University—New York, NY
BA in Psychology

9/95—5/97
Montclair State University—Montclair, NJ

EXPERIENCE **Warwick Valley Farmers' Market**—Warwick, NY (1/11—Present)
Market Manager

- Responsible for the organization, marketing, and operations of market consisting of 34 vendors, attracting an average of 1,800 weekly visitors.
- Liason between Steering Committee, Chamber of Commerce, vendors, consumers, and local government.
- Manage vendor applications, site inspections, sales of market merchandise, billing, and the enforcement of market and governmental regulations.
- Supervise Assistant Market Manager and volunteers on a weekly basis.
- Introduced a community fundraising space and coordinated with local groups.
- Schedule special events: Music, Educational Events, and Chef Demonstrations.

The Buckley School—New York, NY (9/99—6/04)

Head Teacher, Kindergarten (9/01—6/04)

- Mentored Teacher Assistant
- Led parent-teacher conferences and wrote narrative reports
- Created and produced class plays

Head Teacher, Grade 1 (3/01—6/01)

Teacher Assistant, Kindergarten (8/00—3/01)

- Supported head teacher in preparing, creating/executing projects & lessons
- Expanded and taught "Family" unit
- Attended Beginners Teacher's Institute hosted by NYSAIS

Teacher Assistant, Grade 2 (9/99—6/00)

- Led reading groups
- Created and taught unit on "Bridges"
- Attended Priscilla Vail's conference on reading, writing and language

Teach For America—New York, NY (11/98—8/99)

Executive Assistant to Admissions and Assignment (3/99—8/99)

Admissions Intern (11/98—3/99)

Saint Dunstan's Nursery School—Succasunna, NJ (6/97—8/98)

Campcare Counselor

Responsible for 3 and 5 years olds

WinCore / Alacrity—Succasunna, NJ (12/93—8/98)

Software Development Company

Sales Representative, Software Testing, Data Entry, Billing & Shipping,
Receptionist, Production and Data Entry

ACTIVITIES **Association of Teachers in Independent Schools** (10/00—6/04)
Member

Psi Chi, National Honor Society in Psychology
NYU Chapter

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Michelle Gluck

<h2>School Trustee Background Information</h2>
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Michelle Gluck

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board member, Curriculum Team, Building Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I became aware of D.I.R.T. while searching for opportunities environmental education and community involvement in Orange County. After visiting D.I.R.T.'s comprehensive website and reading its' mission, I contacted D.I.R.T members to see how I could contribute.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I wish to serve on the board for D.I.R.T. as a means to stay involved in the planning and curriculum implementation process of the school. As a board member I would use my previous knowledge and experiences in the field of environmental education and sustainability as well as my passions for holistic hands on and community based learning to support D.I.R.T.'s mission to provide children with this valuable education option.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. Yes.

Member of Beacon Arts Community Association, I am certified in DEC Environmental Education teaching methods and have worked in a broad spectrum of educational settings ranging from independent schools, to public schools, to environmental education centers to art centers. I have skills in program development, community building, outreach, creative design, and enjoy collaborating with others to problem solve and make positive progress to achieve goals.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *I am on the Curriculum Planning team with Christina Pahucki, Jeanne Lancer, Kate Eicher, and Kristy Apostolides.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

I would follow the procedures described in the NY State Charter School Conflict of Interest Policy. The board would be alerted of this potential conflict of interest, and the member(s) involved would be given an opportunity to explain the situation or alleged conflict of interest. In the case that the member(s) are deemed to have a significant conflict of interest, further action would be taken by the board to assess and alleviate that conflict through corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

D.I.R.T.'s mission is to provide children with a quality holistic education using the school's rural and agriculturally rich setting and supportive community assets as an opportunity for learning. Students who attend D.I.R.T. will be able to explore all aspects of learning through a creative and hands on curriculum that encourage them to be inquisitive, make connections, and develop strong critical thinking skills. The experiences and education students will gain at D.I.R.T. will result in well- educated citizens who understand the importance of being an active community member and environmental steward.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

D.I.R.T. will provide students with an energetic support system and structure of administrators, educators, community members, stakeholders, and local businesses and organizations who are passionate about sharing a love of learning and recognize the importance of maintaining a healthy community. The educational program at D.I.R.T. is a combination of an environmentally integrated and community based learning curriculum that will meet and exceed the NY State education guidelines while providing students with vital outdoor and hands on learning opportunities.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe a successful charter school is an educational institution that serves as an asset to its student body, parents, and surrounding community. A successful charter school should incorporate a performance based evaluation system for its' students, that does not discourage students, but that gives them resources, encouragement, and desire to improve. It should present an atmosphere that fosters a love of learning, educational achievement, and creative learning opportunities for students that prepare students for a

successful future.

To ensure that DIRT be successful institution the board should be active in all areas of school function. They must oversee the hiring process of staff and teachers to ensure that all persons affiliated with DIRT fit the character of the school and are energetic and passionate about DIRT's mission. Constant evaluation and revision of school policies, procedures, and performance data by the board is key to guide DIRT towards meeting goals and achieving objectives. It is the responsibility of the board to review the schools proposed operating budget and oversee fundraising and outreach opportunities to ensure that DIRT be fiscally sound. The board must possess commitment to facilitate active communication with key players and be willing to spend adequate time to discuss important matters of school function whenever they may occur. It is imperative that the board provides a constant push for implementation of DIRT's key design elements.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

A public charter school board member exists to provide adequate oversight to school functions from the position that they are objective and not directly involved in the school. Board members are responsible for recognizing opinions of students, staff and parents and consider these opinions when discussing issues and making decisions. A board member must support its affiliated charter school and promote the school's mission and educational philosophy. They must encourage development of educational policies that are consistent with education laws of NY State and that the charter school achieves charter requirements. It is also the responsibility of the board members to be proactive in building a strong group of financial supporters for its' charter school and raise funds and gather resources to implement the best educational programs possible.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read and understood the DIRT charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Michelle Gluck (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.

February 25, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

Michelle D. Gluck

Education: SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry '11
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies, Cum Laude
Concentration in Policy, Planning, and Law • Urban Environment Minor

Related Coursework:

- Urban Design Studio, Urban Ecology
- Food: A critical geography
- Solid Waste Management, Environmental Impact Analysis
- Botany, General Ecology, Interpretive Design
- Land Use Law, Environmental Law and Policy
- 601 Tully Project-an ongoing design/build class that advocates for urban revitalization through the renovation of a vacant house into a currently active community center, teaching garden, and educational asset for arts and sciences. January 2009-May 2011 601tully.blogspot.com

Computer Skills: Microsoft Office and Mac Office Suites, Adobe Design, iMovie, iPhoto, Education Edge, Google Drive
Achievements:

- Active participant in Green Campus Initiative, a student run club to promote sustainability
 - Contributed to construction, and implementation of a composting program at SUNY ESF
 - Coordinator of recycled notebook design, construction, and sales
- Student volunteer for an anaerobic composting system study at SUNY ESF
- Senior thesis paper & art installation, "Where Art Meets Science"
- Member of Westchester County 4-H from 2001 to 2007, Vice President from 2005-2007
- Participant of "Arts and Agriculture" design charrettes hosted by Orange County Arts Council, Fall 2011
- Author of article "Where am I again?" published in Orange County Planning Department's Spring Newsletter, 2012
- Recipient of DEC Project WET, Project WILD, and Early Childhood Education training, CPR Certified

Work Experience:

* References available upon request

- 2012 **Member.** Curriculum Team, DIRT Charter School, Warwick, NY
- 2012 **Farmhand.** Pine Hill Farm, Blooming Grove, NY
- 2012 **Co-Director.** Tiorati Regional Nature Museum, Harriman State Park
Developed and implemented lesson plans in environmental and wildlife science for family and youth summer camps. Responsibilities included museum maintenance, animal care, program development and scheduling, and active leadership.
- 2012 **Volunteer.** Climate Ride
Ensured rider safety and handled merchandise sales on a bike tour from NYC to DC to fundraise for sustainability projects.
- 2011 **Intern.** Tuxedo Park School
Worked in areas of school administration including admissions, business development, media outreach, and substitute teaching. Led multiple after-school programs in nature and art. Created a short promotional film about student life.
- 2011 **Intern.** Orange County Environmental Facilities and Services
Surveyed current status of Orange County schools in areas of sustainability and waste management, active grant research.
- 2011 **Teaching Assistant.** Artist in Residence, Edward Smith Elementary School
- 2010 **Apprentice.** Mystic Whaler Schooner
- 2010 **Teaching Assistant/Environmental Educator.** Say Yes to Education
& Collaborated with development staff of Syracuse University to implement inclusive education, multiculturalism, literacy, and experiential learning into an innovative summer curriculum for Syracuse youth.
- 2009
- 2008 **Intern.** New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Water
Worked with Environmental Programs Specialist in areas of water protection, maintenance, and ownership.
- 2007 **Camp Counselor & Café Employee.** Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture
Educated youth about agriculture and livestock care on a progressive farm and education center for sustainability.

Attachment 5a: Charter School Trustee Background Information: Jeanne Lancer

<h2>School Trustee Background Information</h2>
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Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Jeanne Lancer

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board member, Curriculum Team, Building Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached
2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.
3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I became aware through word of mouth and attended an informational meeting.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I want to continue my work on DIRT Charter school and see it come into being. Continuing on as a board member will allow me the opportunity to further our vision for the education of Orange County students. I would use my background as a teacher to advocate on behalf of the educational needs of the students, align school resources to improve achievement and develops strategic plans for the accomplishment of school goals.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *I know the other board member through working with them throughout the application process.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as

an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in

response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

The procedures laid out in the charter school's Conflict of Interest Policy would guide my actions. I would alert the board of this potential conflict of interest, and the member(s) involved would be given an opportunity to explain the situation or alleged conflict of interest. In the case that the member(s) are deemed to have a significant conflict of

interest, further action would be taken by the board to assess and alleviate that conflict through corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential, and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

The school will provide integrated-interdisciplinary instruction that will allow students to focus on environmental and community based learning. Students will receive collaborative, learner based instruction adapted to meet their needs and connect together through their learning. The school favors a minds-on, hands-on experiences using local and natural settings as a way to connect with and improve upon teaching and learning. Students will achieve high academic standards and develop their intellect to its fullest potential.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school will have a well-conceived and powerful mission, a shared educational philosophy that guides decision-making at every level. In an effective charter school, the mission drives every aspect of the school program, and the school program reflects the school's freedom to experiment, to be creative in terms of organization, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction. Commitment to a vision, an innovative spirit, and strict accountability all work to create learning communities. Sharing this educational vision in turn creates a strong sense of community. It is the responsibility of the board to create this shared vision; set student performance standards; oversee development of assessment programs based on those standards; account for student achievement results; adopt the annual budget, aligning school resources to improve achievement; create a healthy environment for work and learning; build strategic partnerships; sustain the school's progress through continuous improvement; adopt and maintain current policies in written format; maintain strong ethical standards. The board has a responsibility to the students to run an efficient and productive school.

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

School board members provide leadership for the school, adopting a unifying vision and mission, soliciting and balancing the participation and input of members of the school community, and advocating on behalf of the educational needs of children. They must develop, implement, and assess policy; institute sound employee relations; conduct open meetings; recognize and conform to the legal mandates imposed by state and federal laws. Additionally, the board has an obligation to assess its successes and failures; promote accountability; avoid abuse of power; enhance public understanding of its mission; conform to standards of ethical behavior; provide a framework for setting goals; and develop strategic plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read, understand and support the charter school application, by-laws and policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Jeanne Lancer (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



March 14, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

Jeanne Lancer



EXPERIENCE

2010 - 2011 *The Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation*
Cuddebackville, NY

Education Director

- *Conduct seasonal on-site delivery of the Museum's programs for school age students*
- *Review and design the Museum's educational programs*
- *Lead the Museum's educational department and supervise its staff*
- *Set and prioritize annual goals and develop long range plans*
- *Direct the scheduling of the Museum's various educational programs*
- *Participate in the management of the Museum's store*

2009 - Present *Warwick Valley Central School District*
Warwick, NY

2011 - Present *Vernon Township School District*
Vernon, NJ

Substitute Teacher (preK-5)

- *Versatile and effective classroom manager, quick to establish good working relationships with staff and students*

2008-2009 *Warwick Valley Central School District*
Warwick, NY

First Grade Teacher/Leave Replacement

- *Used a balanced literacy approach to reading instruction*
- *Worked with all students to ensure their educational success*
- *Implemented curriculum aligned with NYS standards*
- *Collaborated with academic intervention staff to integrate services*
- *Trained in Response to Intervention techniques/progress monitoring of Tier 1 & 2 students*
- *Used curriculum based assessment to screen for "at-risk" students*
- *Provided evidence based interventions and adjusted based on student needs and response*
- *Familiar with using Smartboard and internet based sites to enhance curriculum*

2004-2007 *The Kids Clubhouse* *Pine Island,*
NY

Preschool Teacher

- *Created year-long Science and Math curriculum where students explore our world through hand-on experiments, games and skits*
- *Developed and implemented lessons based on curriculum plan*
- *Designed activities that introduced reading writing, listening and speaking skills*

- *Designed math activities that introduced mathematical concepts such as: number sense, patterning, problem solving and data collection*
- *Developed positive social interactions*
- *Fostered kindergarten readiness skills*
- *Utilized parent volunteers effectively*

1997-2000 Saint Ann School Yonkers, NY

First Grade Teacher 1998-2000

Fourth Grade Teacher 1997-1998

- *Implemented differentiated instruction as a means of motivating all students*
- *Delivered guided reading instruction to small groups to reinforce appropriate reading strategies*
- *Designed and implemented curriculum aligned with NYS standards*
- *Utilized writers workshop to enhance writing skills*
- *Collaborated and communicated effectively with parents, administrators and professional staff*
- *Chaired committee for Middle States Accreditation*

1996-1997 Greenwich Y.W.C.A Greenwich, CT

Head Teacher

- *Created and implemented preschool curriculum plan*
- *Planned and facilitated a literature based enrichment program*
- *Supervised daily routine of an assistant teacher*

1995-1996 Wilton Children's Center Wilton, CT

Assistant Teacher

- *Participated in developing curriculum, leading activities and managing preschool classroom*
- *Maintained communication with parents*
- *Considered Teacher-in-Charge in the event of Director's absence*

EDUCATION

1993-1995 Masters of Arts in Teaching, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

1989-1993 Bachelors of Arts, Fordham University, Bronx, NY

CERTIFICATIONS

New Jersey Standard - Early Childhood (PreK- 3), Elementary (K-5)

New York Permanent - (N-6)

School Trustee Background Information

Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Christina Pahucki

Charter School Name: DIRT Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board member, Curriculum Team, Building Team

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached

2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.

3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I was part of the group that first began talking about the need for school options in Orange County.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I wish to use my teaching experience and commitment to help create a great new school option.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *Our Board is made up of people who are active in the community and so many of us know each other and many of our children go to school together.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you,

your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in

response to items 9-12, you may so indicate. This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

The procedures laid out in the charter school's Conflict of Interest Policy would guide my actions. If there is good cause to believe a member of the board has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, I would inform that member of the basis for my belief and afford him/her an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, we would take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

The DIRT Charter School will provide children with the opportunity to reach their full academic and developmental potential, and become lifelong learners by fostering interdisciplinary learning, creative and critical thinking skills, high academic achievement, and a deep understanding of the interdependence of our local and global existence.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

DIRT Charter School will be dedicated to the stewardship of the environment and the interdisciplinary study of the science of sustainability. The school's educators will use local natural and community surroundings as a context for standards-based instruction. Our proposed location in Orange County would be close to regions of agriculture. There must be ecosystems of water, soil, natural resources, and the possibilities of alternative energy exploration located nearby. The agriculture center which becomes the DIRT environment will be a learning laboratory where students will be able to experiment, farm, garden, and hike daily.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

A successful charter school provides every student with a strong academic and character-building education, will comply with all government and other regulations, and will be fiscally sound. The board of the charter school must:

- *Monitor effective implementation of key design elements.*
- *Monitor and report on progress towards meeting accountability goals.*
- *Facilitate communication with the school leader and authorizer.*
- *Evaluate the performance of the school leader.*
- *Evaluate school policies and procedures and revise to ensure achievement of mission and accountability goals.*
- *Review budget to determine optimum allocation of resources.*
- *Be prepared to spend substantial time on school related matters*

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

The Board will have all the powers and duties permitted by law to oversee the business, property, and affairs of the charter school; will maintain sole fiduciary responsibility and will exercise hiring and firing authority of the school leader.

Board members have a responsibility to solicit input from, and opinions of, the parents of students, and the faculty and staff, regarding issues of significance and to weigh the input and opinions carefully before taking action.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read, understand and support the charter school application, by-laws and policies.

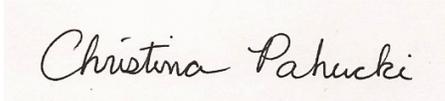
23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

The DIRT Charter School prospective Board members and advisers have a personal commitment to provide an excellent charter school option for Orange County.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Christina Pahucki (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



March 3, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: _____

Business Address: _____

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED] _____

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] _____

Home Address: [REDACTED] _____

CHRISTINA PAHUCKI

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

September 2002 – Present Goshen Middle School Goshen, NY

Art Teacher

- Taught art grades 6 – 8.
- Created curriculum for three art enrichment classes.
- Began helping students to renovate the courtyard into an outdoor classroom.

June 2001 – June 2002 and

June 1997 – June 1998

Goshen Central Schools

Goshen, NY

Substitute Teacher

- Taught art grades 6 - 8 for seven weeks using own lesson plans.
- Substitute taught various grade levels and subjects.

9/2001 – 6/2002

Krieger Elementary School

Poughkeepsie, NY

Art Teacher (0.4)

- Taught art in an urban setting to grades 1 – 5.
- Collaborated with classroom teachers to create innovative displays for academic fair.
- Worked with special needs students to paint huge wall murals.

9/1999 – 6/2001

Pine Bush Central Schools

Pine Bush, NY

Art Teacher (0.7)

- Taught Studio Art classes for grades 9 and 10 and art from a cart for grades K-5.
- Created displays for hallways and the Galleria Mall.

STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

3/1997 – 5/1997

Waterfront Elementary School

Buffalo, NY

- Developed and taught a variety of art lessons to grades K – 8 in an urban setting.

1/1997 – 3/1997

Lakeshore High School

Angola, NY

- Constructed and followed lesson plans for several diverse art courses grades 9 - 12.
- Assisted in creating billboards and advertisements for the school play.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

12/1997 - Present

Footings Inc.

Monroe, NY

Education Support Specialist

- Developed transition plans for students with developmental disabilities by meeting with students, parents, teachers and administrators.
- Trained school staff and students in Person-Centered Planning and transition.
- Supervised all after school programs for elementary students.

EDUCATION

State University of New York at New Paltz

Masters in Art Education, May 2004, 3.8/4.0

State University College at Buffalo, NY

Bachelor of Art Education, May 1997, 3.2/4.0

Orange County Community College, Middletown, NY

Associate of Liberal Arts, May 1995, 3.2/4.0

PAHUCKI@OPTONLINE.NET

School Trustee Background Information

Each proposed or prospective charter school board member must provide the information requested below.

Name: Paul Ruszkiewicz

Charter School Name: D.I.R.T. Charter School

Charter School Address: PO Box 23, Pine Island, NY 10969

To which charter school board position(s) and/or offices(s) are you asking to be appointed? (e.g., member, parent representative, vice-president, Finance committee, etc.): Board Member

As you may know, serving on a public charter school board of trustees (“board”) is a position of great trust and responsibility. As a member of a public charter school’s board, you are charged with overseeing the education of all students enrolled in the school, as well as the expenditure of public monies directed to the charter school.

The Department’s consent is required **before** any new member may serve on the board. Accordingly, and in order to properly evaluate proposed board members, we ask that you please provide full and complete answers to each of the items below and provide the required assurance indicated. Note that providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval, nullifying your appointment to the board.

Background

1. Please provide your educational and employment history. You may do so by attaching a résumé. Resume Attached

2. Please affirm that you are or will be at least eighteen years old at the time of your appointment/election to the board. I affirm.

3. Please affirm that you have read Article 56 of the New York State Education Law, and understand the relationship between a charter school and the authorized chartering entity as defined in that statute. I affirm.

4. Please indicate how you became aware of the charter school and the opportunity to serve as a member of its board.

I learned about the DIRT Charter School when a group of community members interested in starting a charter school asked me to become involved. As an active member of the local agricultural industry I was asked to become involved since the school will have a strong focus on agriculture and environmental science.

5. Please explain why you wish to serve on the board.

I would like to serve on the board of the DIRT Charter School because I strongly believe in and support the mission and vision of the school. This is a strong agricultural area and I feel that it is important that our young people have a strong understanding and appreciation for our agricultural industry and the environment. I also feel that it is important for a school of this nature to have a member of the agricultural community on it's board.

6. Please indicate whether you have previously served or are currently serving on a board of a school district, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 1, above). In addition, please describe any other experience, knowledge or skills you feel is relevant to service on the charter school board. This does not apply to me.

7. Please indicate whether or not you have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor and/or felony in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

8. Please indicate if you currently have any criminal charge(s) pending against you in state or federal court in any jurisdiction.

This does not apply to me.

Conflict of Interest

9. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any of the other prospective or current board members.

Yes. *I have gotten to know the other prospective board members as we have worked together on the DIRT Charter School committee. Some of the prospective members I knew previously since our children attended the same school.*

10. Please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other family member knows any person who is a prospective or current charter school employee.

I / we do not know any such persons.

11. Please indicate if you, your spouse, or other family member or any corporation, business or other entity in which you, your spouse or other family member serve as an employee, officer, or director or own a controlling interest in, contracts or does business with, or plans to contract or do business with, the charter school, including but not limited to, the lease of real or personal property to the charter school.

No.

12. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider (a management company, whether for-profit or not-for-profit), please indicate whether you, your spouse, or any family member knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If your answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

13. If the charter school is partnered with an educational service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member has a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, please provide a detailed description.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

14. If the charter school is partnered with an educational services provider, please indicate if you, your spouse or other family member anticipates conducting, or is conducting, any business with the provider. If so, please indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

Not applicable because the School does not/will not contract with a management company or charter management organization.

15. Please indicate whether you, your spouse or other family member is a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or is otherwise associated with, any organization which filed an application in conjunction with the charter school, i.e., is partnered with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to items 9-12, you may so indicate.

This does not apply to me, my spouse or other family members.

16. Please indicate the potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests (if any) that would, or are likely to, exist should you be approved for service on the charter school's board.

None

17. Please explain how you would handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the charter school's board are involved in working for their own benefit, or the benefit of their friends and family.

If I believed that any other board members were working for their own benefit or the benefit of their friends or family I would bring it up at a board meeting to make the entire

board aware of any potential conflict of interest. That way the entire board could discuss any conflict of interest and take appropriate actions to eliminate any such conflict.

Educational Philosophy

18. Please explain your understanding of the charter school's mission and/or philosophy.

I believe that the mission and philosophy of DIRT Charter school is to develop students with strong critical thinking skills who have an appreciation and awareness of their local and global environment. Students who possess and develop these skills will become active, life-long learners. I believe that this philosophy is particularly important for elementary students as it will give them a solid foundation for a successful educational career.

19. Please explain your understanding of the educational program of the charter school.

The educational program of the DIRT Charter School will meet or exceed core curriculum standards set by the state and will also give students opportunities for hands on learning experiences. Students will learn how skills in core subjects such as english, mathematics, science, and social studies relate to real-world problem solving skills. DIRT Charter School will also provide extensive after school programs to meet students interests.

20. Please indicate what you believe to be the characteristics of a successful charter school. In particular, please provide the specific steps you think the board of the charter school will need to take to ensure that this charter school is and remains successful.

I believe that in order for a charter school to be successful it needs to have a strong curriculum based on a good educational philosophy. It is also important that all of the board members, teachers, and staff have a strong understanding of the vision and mission of the charter school. In order for the DIRT Charter School to be successful the board will have to:

- 1. Develop SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of the students.*
- 2. Develop an evaluation system so that the board can annually evaluate it's goals as well as develop new goals.*
- 3. Develop a decision making process that incorporates input and feedback from teachers, staff, parents and students so that decisions made by the board will be in the best interests of everyone affected by those decisions.*
- 4. Develop an annual evaluation system so that:*
 - a. The board can evaluate the performance of teachers and staff.*
 - b. Teachers, staff, and parents can evaluate the performance of the board and it's members*

Other

21. Please explain your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member.

The role of a public charter school board member is to work with the other board members to ensure that the school is providing the best possible education for its students and that public funds are being spent responsibly. Charter school board members also need to be familiar with the open meetings law and be aware of what circumstances do or do not justify going into executive session as well as what topics can be discussed during an executive session.

22. Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

I affirm that I have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies.

23. Please provide any other information that you feel is pertinent to the Department's review.

A Statement of Assurance must be signed by and submitted for each proposed Board Member.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

I, Paul Ruskiewicz (name of proposed board member) state that I am the applicant for board member approval and I have read the questionnaire and any supporting documents and know the contents thereof; that the same is true to my knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true and further acknowledge that I am aware of the fact that, pursuant to Penal Law §175.30, a person who knowingly offers a false instrument for filing to a public official or public servant is guilty of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the 2nd Degree, a Class A Misdemeanor.



March 5, 2013

Signature

Date

Please note that this document is considered a public record and as such, may be made available to members of the public upon request under the Freedom of Information Law. Personal contact information provided below will be redacted.

Business Telephone: [REDACTED]

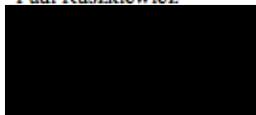
Business Address: [REDACTED]

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Paul Ruskiewicz



Education

Warwick Valley High School 1994

SUNY Cobleskill 1996 AAS Agricultural Engineering

Cornell University 1998 BS Plant Science

Cornell University 2000 MPS Farm Management and Production Economics

Work

Ruskiewicz Farms: In partnership with my father I own and manage a two hundred acre vegetable farm, producing mainly onions as well as five varieties of winter squash, pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn, field corn and soybeans. We employ five seasonal employees. I have been farming full-time since completing my master's degree in 2000. Prior to that I farmed part-time through high school and college|

Professional Development

2005 Graduate of LEAD NY Class X: A two year leadership and professional development program for professionals in the agricultural and food industry in New York.

Boards and Organizations

Orange County Vegetable Improvement Cooperative Association: President

Wallkill Valley Drainage Improvement Association: Chairman

Orange County Farm Bureau: Board of Directors

Town of Warwick Planning Board

New York State Vegetable Growers Association: Board of Directors

New York State Onion Industry Council: Chairman

Attachment 5b: Proposed By-Laws (as of July 1, 2013)

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the Corporation is Developing Innovative Rural Thinking (DIRT) Charter School (the “School”).

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The School has been organized as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. The School will take no action that is inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws.

ARTICLE III: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A. Powers: The Board shall conduct or direct the affairs of the School and exercise its powers, subject to the provisions of applicable law (including the Education Law and Not for Profit Corporation Law), as well as the requirements of the School’s Charter and these Bylaws. The Board may delegate the management of the activities of the School to others, so long as the affairs of the School are managed, and its powers are exercised, under the Board’s ultimate jurisdiction.

Without limiting the generality of the powers hereby granted to the Board, but subject to the same limitations, the Board shall have all the powers enumerated in these Bylaws, and the following specific powers:

1. To elect and remove Trustees;
2. To select and remove Officers, agents and employees of the School; to prescribe powers and duties for them and to fix their compensation;
3. To conduct, manage and control the affairs and activities of the School, and to make rules and regulations;
4. To enter into contracts, leases and other agreements which are, in the Board’s judgment, necessary or desirable in obtaining the purposes of promoting the interests of the School;
5. To carry on the business of operating the School and apply any surplus that results from the business activity to any activity in which the School may engage;
6. To act as trustee under any trust incidental to the School’s purposes, and to receive, hold, administer, exchange and expend funds and property subject to such a trust;
7. To acquire real or personal property, by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise, and to hold, improve, lease, sublease, mortgage, transfer in trust, encumber, convey or otherwise dispose of such property;
8. To borrow money, incur debt, and to execute and deliver promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, and other evidences of debt and securities, subject to the provisions of the Not for Profit Corporation Law and any limitations noted in the by-laws;
9. To indemnify and maintain insurance on behalf of any of its Trustees, Officers, employees or agents for liability asserted against or incurred by such person in such capacity or arising out of such person’s status as such, subject to the applicable provisions of the New York Not for Profit Corporation Law and the limitations noted in these Bylaws.

B. Number of Board of Trustees: The number of the Board of Trustees of the School shall be not fewer than five (5) and shall not exceed fifteen (15). The Board shall fix the exact number of Trustees, within these limits, by Board resolution or amendment of the Bylaws.

C. Election of Board of Trustees: The Board shall elect the Trustees by the vote of a majority of the Board Trustees then in office or, in the event that only one Trustee remains, then by the sole remaining Trustee.

D. Eligibility: The Board may elect any person who is:

1. At least 18 years of age.
2. Able to read and write English.
3. A U.S. citizen.
4. NOT an employee of the charter school
5. Does NOT reside with an employee of the charter school
6. Does NOT have a member of his/her immediate family on the Board
7. Does NOT simultaneously hold another incompatible office (e.g., town supervisor)
8. Has NOT have been removed from a school district office within one year of election

E. Term of Office: Each director shall be elected for a term of 3 years and shall hold office until a successor has been elected and qualified. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the first 3 years of its existence, at least 2 Board members shall serve a 1-year term, and at least 2 Board members shall serve a 2-year term. New Board members may be elected at any time to fill vacancies. If a Board member is elected at a time other than the annual meeting, his or her 3-year term shall be calculated starting from the date of the most recent annual meeting.

F. Elections: The Board shall elect Trustees whose terms begin on July 1st of a given year at the Annual Meeting for that year, or at a Regular Meeting designated for that purpose, or at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.

G. Resignation: A Board member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair of the Board or the Secretary. Any resignation shall take effect upon receipt of notice or at any later time specified in that notice. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, affirmative acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. If the resignation specifies a later effective date, a successor may be elected prior to such effective date to take office when the resignation becomes effective.

H. Removal: A Board member may be removed from office at any time by a vote of a majority of the directors then in office, in a manner consistent with the laws of New York.

I. Vacancies: A vacancy in the Board shall be deemed to exist in the event that the actual number of directors is less than the authorized number for any reason. The Board may declare vacant the office of any Board member who has been declared of unsound mind by a final order of court or has been convicted of a felony. Vacancies on the Board may be filled by approval of the Board of Trustees or, if the number of

Trustees then in office is less than a quorum, by (1) unanimous written consent of the Trustees then in office, (2) a vote of a majority of the Trustees then in office or (3) a sole remaining Trustee. Each Trustee elected or appointed to fill a vacancy, whether by the Board of Trustees, shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the term, or until his or her death, resignation, or removal from office.

J. Compensation of Trustees: Trustees shall serve without compensation. However, the Board may approve reimbursement of a Trustee's actual and necessary expenses while conducting School business.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

A. Place of Meetings: Board Meetings shall be held at the School Facility or at any other reasonably convenient place as the Board may designate; provided that Board meetings shall be scheduled at least monthly.

B. Annual Meeting: An Annual Meeting shall be held in the month of June of each year for the purpose of electing Trustees, making and receiving reports on corporate affairs, and transacting such other business as comes before the meeting.

C. Frequency of Meetings: A minimum of twelve (12) meetings (inclusive of the June Annual Meeting and any Special Meetings) shall be scheduled each year on dates determined by the Board.

D. Special Meetings: A Special Meeting shall be held at any time called by any Trustee upon written demand of not less than one half of the entire Board.

E. Adjournment: A majority of the Trustees present at a meeting, whether or not a quorum, may adjourn the meeting to another time and place.

F. Notice to Trustees: Notices to Trustees of Board Meetings shall be given as follows:

1. If the Board fixes the dates of regular meetings (which may include the Annual Meeting) for the year, then such meetings may be held without further notice of time and place. In the event that the date of an Annual Meeting or regular meeting is changed (or a regular meeting is added), written notice of the new meeting date (or the date of the new regular meeting) will be provided at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
2. Special Meetings shall be held upon reasonable notice (at least 48 hours, if practicable).

G. Quorum and Voting: A majority of the total number of authorized Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The vote of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. No business shall be considered by the Board at any meeting at which a quorum is not present, and the only motion which the Chair of the Board shall entertain at such meeting is a motion to adjourn.

H. Video Participation in Meetings: Trustees may participate in a meeting through use of video screen communication. Participation in a meeting through use of video screen communication constitutes presence in person at that meeting so long as all members participating in the meeting are able to see and hear one another.

I. Public Notice: Public notice of all Board meetings and of all meetings of Committees shall be given in accordance with the requirements of the Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (the Open Meetings Law).

ARTICLE V: ACTION BY THE BOARD

A. Board Approved Policies: The Board may adopt additional governance and management policies as it deems appropriate.

B. Compensation Review: The Board shall review any compensation packages (including all benefits) of the Principal and other employees. The Board shall approve such compensation only after determining that the compensation is just and reasonable. This review and approval shall occur annually, as well as when an employee is hired, when the term of employment of such officer is renewed or extended, and when the compensation of an employee is modified.

C. Standing Committees: The Board may create standing committees of no less than 2 Trustees, elected by the Board, to focus on particular aspects of the operation of the School. These committees may include a finance committee to focus on accounting for revenues and expenditures, an audit committee to ensure a proper audit of the School's finances on an annual basis, and a compensation committee to focus on the salaries and benefits received by employees to ensure competitiveness, reasonableness, and fairness.

D. Advisory Committees: The Board may create one or more Advisory Committees, each consisting of no less than 3 Trustees, non-Trustees or a combination of Trustees and non-Trustees. Appointments to any Advisory Committee shall be by approval of the Board of Trustees. Advisory Committees may not exercise the authority of the Board to make decisions on behalf of the School. Advisory Committees shall be restricted to making recommendations to the Board.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

A. Officers: The officers of the School shall be a Chair of the Board, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The School may also have such other officers as may be determined by the Board. One person may hold two or more offices, except that neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer may serve concurrently as the Chair of the Board.

1. Chair of the Board: The Chair of the Board shall, if present, preside at all meetings of the Board, and shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board.

2. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a full and complete record of the proceedings of the Board and its committees, shall give notice of all Board meetings as required by law, and in general shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board.

3. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the School. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, adequate and correct books and records of account. The Treasurer shall send the Trustees such financial statements and reports as are required to be given by law, and as may be prescribed by these Bylaws or the Board. The books of account shall be open to inspection by any Trustee upon request at all reasonable times. The Treasurer shall deposit, all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the School with such depositories as designated by the Board, shall disburse or cause to be disbursed the School's funds as ordered by the Board, shall render to the Board, upon request, an account of the Treasurer's transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the School, and shall exercise and perform such other powers and duties as may be prescribed by the Board.

B: Election and Term: The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by the

Board at an annual meeting and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

C. Resignation: An officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the School. Any resignation shall take effect upon receipt of notice or at any later time specified in that notice. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of resignation, affirmative acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any resignation is without prejudice to the contract or other rights, if any, of the School in respect of the officer.

D. Removal: Officers may be removed from office by the Board, consistent with the voting procedures in the bylaws.

E. Vacancies: A vacancy in any office for any reason shall be filled by the Board.

ARTICLE VII: NO LIABILITY OF TRUSTEES; INDEMNIFICATION; INSURANCE

A. No Liability of Trustees: The Trustees shall not be personally liable for the School's debts, liabilities or other obligations.

B. Indemnification: The School shall (in the case of Trustees and Officers) and may (in the case of employees and agents), to the fullest extent permitted by law, indemnify any person made, or threatened to be made, a party or witness to any action, investigation or proceeding by reason of the fact that he or she (or his or her testator) is or was a Trustee, officer, employee or agent of the School, against judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement and reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees. No indemnification may be made to or on behalf of any person if (a) his or her acts were committed in bad faith, or were the result of his or her deliberate dishonesty and were material to such action or proceeding, or (b) he or she personally gained a financial profit or other advantage to which he or she was not legally entitled in the transaction or matter in which indemnification is sought.

C. Insurance: The School shall have the power to purchase and maintain all insurance policies deemed to be in the best interest of the School, including insurance to indemnify the School for any obligation which it incurs as a result of its indemnification of Trustees, Officers, employees or agents, or to indemnify such persons in instances in which they may be so indemnified.

ARTICLE VIII: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A. Code of Ethics: The Board shall approve a Code of Ethics applicable to Trustees, officers and employees of the School, compliant with the General Municipal Law, which may be amended from time to time by the Board.

B. Conflict of Interest. Any Trustee, Officer, or Committee member having an interest in a contract, other transaction or program presented to or discussed by the Board or Committee for authorization, approval, or ratification shall make a prompt, full and frank disclosure of his or her interest to the Board or Committee prior to its acting on such contract or transaction. Such disclosure shall include all relevant and material facts known to such person about the contract or transaction that may reasonably be construed to be adverse to the School's interest. The body to which such disclosure is made shall thereupon determine, by majority vote, whether the disclosure shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist. If a conflict is deemed to exist, such person shall not vote on, nor use his or her personal influence on, nor be present during the discussion or deliberations with respect to, such contract or transaction (other than to present factual information or to respond to questions prior to the discussion). The minutes of the meeting shall reflect proceedings, including the disclosure made, the vote

thereon and, where applicable, the abstention from voting and participation.

C. Contracts: For the purpose of this section, a person shall be deemed to have an “interest” in a contract or other transaction if he or she is the party (or one of the parties) contracting or dealing with the School, or is a director, trustee or officer of, or has a significant financial or influential interest in the entity contracting or dealing with the School. These provisions will be consistent with the General Municipal Law.

D. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy:

(1) If the Board of Trustees has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

(2) If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the Board of Trustees determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

ARTICLE IX: OTHER PROVISIONS

A. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the School begins on July 1 of each year and ends June 30.

B. Execution of Instruments: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Board may adopt a resolution authorizing any Officer or agent of the School to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of or on behalf of the School. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power to bind the School by any contract or engagement, to pledge the School’s credit, or to render it liable monetarily for any purpose or any amount.

C. Checks and Notes: Except as otherwise specifically provided by Board resolution, checks, drafts, promissory notes, orders for the payment of money, and other evidence of indebtedness of the School may be signed by the Chair of the Board, the Head of School, or Treasurer. Check requests for amounts of \$5,000.00 or greater must be signed by two (2) of these individuals.

D. Gifts: The Board may accept on behalf of the School any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purposes or for any specific purpose of the School. The School shall retain complete control and discretion over the use of all contributions it receives.

E. Grants: The Board shall exercise itself, or delegate, subject to its supervision, control over grants, contributions, and other financial assistance provided by the School, including, without limitation, fiscal sponsorship relationships.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Except as otherwise provided by law, these Bylaws may be amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by approval of the Board.

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY

The undersigned does hereby certify that the undersigned is the Secretary of the School, an education School duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York; that the foregoing Bylaws of said School were duly and regularly adopted as such by the Board of Trustees of said School; and that the above and foregoing Bylaws are now in

full force and effect.

Secretary of the School

Attachment 5c: Proposed Code of Ethics

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE RURAL THINKING CHARTER SCHOOL CODE OF ETHICS FOR SCHOOL TRUSTEES, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

The Board of Trustees recognizes that sound ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of school board trustees and their staff as educational leaders in their community. Actions based on an ethical code of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of school goals. The Board also recognizes its obligation under the General Municipal Law to adopt a code of ethics consistent with the provisions of the General Municipal Law, setting forth the standards of conduct required of all school trustees, officers and employees.

Therefore, every officer and employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, including Board Trustees, shall adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. Gifts: An officer or employee shall not directly or indirectly solicit any gifts; nor shall an officer or employee accept or receive any single gift having a value of \$75 or more, or gifts from the same source having a cumulative value of \$75 or more over a twelve-month period, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, if it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on his or her part.

However, the Board welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members. Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.

2. Confidential information: An officer or employee shall not disclose confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of his or her official duties or use such information to further his or her own personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding any matters discussed in an executive session of the Board, whether such information is deemed confidential or not.

3. Representation before the Board: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board.

4. Representation before the Board for a contingent fee: An officer or employee shall not receive or enter into any agreement, express or implied, for compensation for services to be rendered in relation to any matter before the school board, whereby the compensation is to be dependent or contingent upon any action by the school with respect to such matter, provided that this paragraph shall not prohibit the fixing at any time of fees based upon the reasonable value of the services rendered.

5. Disclosure of interest in matters before the Board: A member of the Board of Trustees and any officer or employee of the school, whether paid or unpaid, who participates in the discussion or gives official opinion to the Board on any matter before the Board shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he or she has in such matter. The term — "interest" means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee.

6. Investments in conflict with official duties: An officer or employee shall not invest or hold any investment directly in any financial, business, commercial or other private transaction that creates a conflict with his or her official duties.

7. Private employment: An officer or employee shall not engage in, solicit, negotiate for or promise to accept private employment when that employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

8. Future employment: An officer or employee shall not, after the termination of service or employment with the Board, appear before the Board or any panel or committee of the Board, in relation to any case, proceeding, or application in which he or she personally participated during the period of his or her service or employment or that was under his or her active consideration. This shall not bar or prevent the timely filing by a present or former officer or employee of any claim, account, demand or suit against the district on his or her own behalf or on behalf of any member of his or her family arising out of any personal injury or property damage or for any lawful benefit authorized or permitted by law.

Distribution of Code of Ethics

The Chief Executive Officer shall cause a copy of this Code of Ethics to be distributed annually to every officer and employee of the school. Each officer and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering upon the duties of his or her office or employment.

Penalties

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, any person who shall knowingly and intentionally violate any of the provisions of the Board's code of ethics may be fined, suspended or removed from office or employment, as the case may be, in the manner provided by law.

Attachment 6a: CMO Information

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is an independent charter school and not affiliated with a CMO.

Attachment 6b: Proposed Management Contract with CMO

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is an independent charter school and not affiliated with a CMO.

Attachment 7: Partnership Information

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is not affiliated with a partner organization.

Attachment 8a: Hiring and Personnel Policies and Procedures

Equal Opportunity Employer: It is the policy of DIRT Charter School to seek and employ the best qualified personnel without regard to sex, race, religion, color, creed, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, veteran status age, marital status, or disability. It is further this organization's policy to ensure equal opportunity for the advancement of staff members and equal treatment in the areas of upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, layoff, and termination.

DIRT Charter School will comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and welcomes applications from people with disabilities. The school does not discriminate against qualified, disabled individuals solely for reasons of their disability. Consistent with this policy, DIRT is committed to:

- Recruit, hire and promote on the basis of an individual's qualifications and competence for the job;
- Make the necessary, reasonable accommodations to enable a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job;
- Protect the disabled individual's right to privacy and confidentiality to the extent possible; and
- Full compliance with all requirements of applicable law, including those relating to employee benefits.

Qualifications: DIRT Charter School will search for the best teachers and staff. Below are the responsibilities and qualifications for key personnel:

Principal

Responsibilities:

- Provide leadership and direction to all school staff
- Hire, evaluate and terminate staff members
- Implement the school program with fidelity to the charter
- Implement all school policies and procedures as directed by the Board of Trustees
- Facilitate and encourage parent involvement
- Make formal reports to the Board of Trustees, State Education Department and others
- Establish a strong school culture and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure proper budgeting and financial oversight
- Provide guidance and support to teachers to improve instruction and raise student achievement
- Evaluate school programs and recommend policy changes and resource allocation
- Manage student data collection and information updates
- Respond to grievances by parents and staff
- Handle serious discipline issues
- Conduct long-term strategic planning
- Provide staff development training
- Regularly observe teachers and provide critical feedback to improve instruction
- Evaluate teachers and make recommendations for placement and retention
- Facilitate development of curriculum, instruction and assessment

Qualifications:

- Commitment to DIRT's mission

- High expectations for themselves, staff and students
- Teaching and leadership experience with elementary or middle level grades
- Experience hiring, managing and evaluating employees
- High level of organization and resourcefulness necessary for start-up environment
- Exemplary communication skills
- Strong recommendations from prior employers, colleagues and employees
- Master's degree in education
- At least 5 years of administrative experience in a school or its equivalent

Director of Business & Operations

Responsibilities:

- Oversee all day-to-day operational activities of the school in collaboration with Principal
- Manage a team of custodians, office staff and food service staff
- Manage academic-related systems and activities, including student recruitment and enrollment lottery, student information systems
- Coordinate HR functions
- Oversee procurement and building maintenance, renovations and upgrades
- Coordinate food services and transportation
- Plan logistics for school-wide events for students, staff and families
- Prepare an annual budget and support the annual auditing process
- Manage the day-to-day finances to ensure overall financial health of the school
- Conduct accurate and timely billing to ensure adequate cash flow
- Manage payroll and benefits
- Ensure school-wide compliance with health and safety laws, teacher certification, city and state education mandates, and all federal and state workplace regulations.
- Maintain inventory of all assets in the school building, including computers, equipment, furniture, uniforms, etc.
- Provide regular reporting of financial status to the Principal and the Board

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree
- At least five years in an administrative or management role in a school or its equivalent
- Experience in accounting
- At least 1 year direct experience successfully managing staff
- Team-player capable of working both collaboratively and independently
- Organized planner and project manager with proven ability to multi-task, take initiative, prioritize effectively, and deliver for multiple stakeholders on deadlines
- Proactive and creative problem-solver
- Quantitative skills and experience with accounting, budgets, and financial management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, ability to interact with various stakeholders from parents, students, vendors, teachers, etc.

Teachers

Responsibilities:

- Prepare joyful, rigorous and engaging lessons for students
- Regularly assess student learning against measurable benchmarks
- Use data to identify students in need of remediation or enrichment
- Contribute to the professional community by identifying needs and developing solutions
- Demonstrate the school's virtues and integrate character education into instruction

- Actively participate in staff development activities and staff meetings

Qualifications:

- Certification in appropriate field(s) (preferred)
- High expectations for learning and behavior
- Demonstrated success in teaching
- Strong classroom management skills
- Reflective and open to feedback with the desire to continuously improve
- A team player who is not deterred by a fast-paced, constantly changing environment
- Eagerness to go above and beyond the requirements of the job to innovate and improve the organization

Hiring Process: While the school principal has final authority to hire staff members, he or she may form a committee to assist with the process. All job applicants must fill out completely and sign an application for employment. In addition, all job applicants must:

- Provide an up-to-date resume;
- Supply proof of teaching certification and qualification pursuant to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (such as college matriculation, copies of school transcripts); and
- Be interviewed by the Principal and some Board advisors
- Be observed teaching, either at DIRT Charter School, their current school, or in a setting similar to a classroom.

The hiring process will include the following additional mandatory steps:

- At least two references checked, credentials verified, qualifications confirmed;
- Documentation of employment eligibility, i.e., proof of identity and legal authority to work in the United States;
- Fingerprinting and a criminal background check and clearance.

Pay Scale: A suggested pay scale based on education level, professional experience, and years spent at school is shown below.

Years of Experience	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
0	\$40,000	\$41,500
1	\$41,000	\$42,500
2	\$42,000	\$43,500
3	\$43,000	\$44,500
4	\$44,000	\$45,500
5	\$45,000	\$46,500
6	\$46,000	\$47,500
7	\$47,000	\$48,500
8	\$48,000	\$49,500
9	\$49,000	\$50,500
10	\$50,000	\$51,500
11	\$50,750	\$52,250

12	\$51,500	\$53,000
13	\$52,250	\$53,750
14	\$53,000	\$54,500
15	\$53,750	\$55,250
16	\$54,500	\$56,000
17	\$55,250	\$56,750
18	\$56,000	\$57,500
19	\$56,750	\$58,250
20	\$57,500	\$59,000
21	\$58,250	\$60,000

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment: Employees shall receive annual letters of employment that state the terms of their employment. Employees may be hired as regular full-time employees, and as such will be eligible for all benefits provided by the school. The organization also may hire part-time staff. Part-time staff is those who are employed for less than 40 hours per work week. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits. Time off work without pay for part-time employees may be granted by the Principal or his or her designee. DIRT Charter School will verify that all of our employees are authorized for employment in the United States. All employees will complete an I-9 form.

Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Check: DIRT Charter School faculty (including substitute teachers), staff (including temporary staff) and consultants working in the school must pass a fingerprint and criminal background check as a condition of employment. Consultants who are either independent contractors or agents of a company who have unsupervised access to students and whose work involves spending time in the school also must be fingerprinted and have a criminal background check. Classroom volunteers who have a consistent, regular presence in the school and who work with children in an unsupervised capacity must undergo fingerprinting and criminal background checks. It is not the policy of DIRT Charter School to require fingerprinting and background checks on parent classroom volunteers for general community activities with children, as they do not have consistent, regular unsupervised access to students. No employee may start working until clearance is received. All employees are required to notify the Principal within five days of any criminal conviction if it occurred either in or out of the workplace.

Drug-Free Workplace: Employees will be notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or uses of controlled substances are prohibited in the workplace.

Smoking: All facilities of DIRT Charter School will be smoke-free.

Performance Evaluation: Performance evaluations are conducted for all staff and provide an opportunity to discuss plans for professional growth and development. The Principal is responsible for employees' performance evaluations. Each year each staff member will undergo a thorough summative performance review with the Principal. At this time, the employee will receive formal feedback on his or her performance. The performance evaluation will consider evidence gathered throughout the school year. A performance evaluation consists of a written review and

assessment of job performance followed by an in-depth discussion. The written performance evaluation and any written comments become part of the staff member's personal file. Teacher evaluations will be used to determine retention, placement and performance bonuses.

The school may use the following mechanisms to inform teachers and other staff if their performance is below expectations: oral and written warnings, improvement plans and suspension. Employees may also be terminated for misconduct and/or poor job performance (see termination section below). All teachers will receive ongoing staff development through trainings, coaching and mentoring. Teachers who demonstrate a deficiency in any aspect of their responsibilities will receive additional assistance. If the deficiency continues, the teacher will be dismissed. The Principal is directly responsible to the Board of Directors. In the event of failure in the performance of his/her duties, he/she will be dismissed. Evaluations are among the factors considered in determining salary increases. Other factors include, but are not limited to, competitive data, the financial resources of DIRT Charter School and the general state of the economy.

Termination: Each employee will be employed on an "at will" basis. The Board of Trustees has the authority to terminate an employee with or without cause, unless such termination would violate applicable law. Offenses which can result in immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to:

1. Possession, use, sale, purchase, or distribution on school property, or reporting to work under the influence, of a drug and/or alcohol.
2. Falsifying or altering records.
3. Theft of school property.
4. Sabotaging or willfully damaging school equipment or the property of other employees.
5. Insubordination involving, but not limited to, defaming, assaulting, or threatening to assault a supervisor, and refusing to carry out the order of a supervisor.
6. Fighting or provoking a fight on school premises.
7. Absence for three days without notice, in which event the employee will be deemed to have quit voluntarily.
8. Working for another employer while on leave without consent of the school.
9. Carrying concealed weapons on school property or during any school-sponsored event.
10. Treating a student in a cruel or inappropriate way.
11. Failure to perform professional duties.
12. Poor job performance.
13. Undermining the code of ethics of DIRT Charter School.

Final Pay: Employees who leave the service of DIRT Charter School for any reason shall be entitled to all pay that may be due them, with the following qualifications:

1. Employees will be advised of their rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) to continue health care coverage for themselves and their dependents at group rates at their own expense for up to 18 months.
2. An employee who is terminated or who resigns must return all office keys, identification, security cards and codes, any borrowed school property, including personal laptop and office materials and supplies, in such employee's possession to the Principal. Failure to return DIRT's items will result in delay in payment of final pay until all of DIRT's property is returned.
3. No information or copies of information, including but in no way limited to files, memos,

computer-stored items, lists, or other similar information, may be taken by such employee without the express permission of the Principal.

4. 4. The final date of employment is the final date on which the employee serves his or her duties at DIRT. It shall never be construed as the date upon which the employee receives his or her final pay.

Severance Pay: Employees shall not be entitled to severance pay.

Faculty Responsibilities: The first day of school, for students, for the 2013-14 academic year is September 3, 2013 and the last day for students and teachers is June 20, 2014, unless DIRT has to make up an excess of snow days. Teachers are required to attend the Summer Professional Development week from August 26 to August 30. Faculty should expect to be at school from 7:55 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Faculty will attend one weekly meeting after school for one hour. Faculty members are required to be present at all classes or other scheduled responsibilities. When not in the classroom or performing scheduled duties, faculty members are expected to be at school to attend all school meetings and assemblies, and to be available to students.

Leave and Absences: DIRT Charter School does not distinguish between Personal Leave, Bereavement Leave or Sick Leave. All staff members must request of the Principal the use of leave, giving advance notice whenever possible, and all instructional staff should make every reasonable attempt to use leave so as to disrupt classroom instructional time as little as possible. All employees should use their best judgment in determining what constitutes “reasonable” leavetaking. As a general guideline, the school shall consider three days in the case of bereavement, ten days for illness, and three personal days annually “reasonable.” Additional days may be considered reasonable with sufficient explanation.

All absences and lateness must be reported directly to the Director of Business and Operations by telephone by 6:30 a.m. The Director of Business and Operations will retain substitutes as necessary. Teachers are expected to keep up-to-date lesson plans on file, which can be referred to in case of an absence. When an absence is planned faculty members should communicate, in writing, to the Principal, the day(s) he/she will be absent. In-class and homework assignments should be carefully communicated to the class and to the substitute teacher and the Director of Business and Operations should be informed of the arrangements that have been made. Faculty must call the Director of Business and Operations each day they are absent, unless the staff member is on an approved leave of absence. Employees who are absent for three (3) or more days and have not contacted the Director of Business and Operations will be considered to have abandoned their employment, and school records will reflect that the individual voluntarily terminated his or her employment with DIRT. Faculty with excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness cannot perform their jobs effectively and disrupt the operation of the school. Therefore, excessive absenteeism or lateness may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to notify the Director of Business and Operations before the start of school will be considered an unexcused absence and will be subject to disciplinary action. Teachers who must be absent for reasons other than illness must communicate, in writing, and arrange for their absence in advance with the Director of Business and Operations and Principal.

Handling Emergencies: All staff members are urged to familiarize themselves with the building facilities and the location of fire-fighting equipment; they are also encouraged to take the Red Cross training for first aid and child CPR. In emergency situations staff shall use their best

judgment in following these procedures. If anyone needs immediate medical attention, contact the nurse, the Principal and possibly 911. Do not allow the person/student to be left unattended by an adult. Designate a staff person to wait outside the facility for the ambulance and emergency officials to arrive at the school entrance and escort them to the classroom. Office staff or the nurse will notify the student's family as soon as possible.

Reporting Responsibilities: As school personnel staff members are MANDATED to report SUSPECTED child abuse or neglect. We need not be certain that a child is being abused; we need only to suspect abuse or neglect in order to report it. The following examples of "Red Flags" should be reported to the counselor immediately:

- A child who talks about wanting to hurt or kill him or herself.
- Any injury, mark or bruise that looks concerning and for which there is no viable explanation.
- A child who complains that he/she cannot sit down because they have been spanked.
- Inappropriate sexualized behavior, either acting out or knowledge that is not age appropriate.
- A child who expresses fear or concern about going home, or about someone in his / her home or about something happening at home.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or maltreated you should contact the social worker or Principal in person as well as provide them with written documentation by using the Confidential Report of an Allegation of Child Abuse. Once this is completed it is every teacher's responsibility to report the suspicion to the Association of Children's Services (ASC) with consultation of the Principal. Do not let a child that you suspect may be a victim of abuse leave school at the end of the day without first talking to the Principal. In addition, all employees are REQUIRED to report any allegations of child abuse in an educational setting to the Principal. The term educational setting means the building and grounds of any school as well as vehicles used to transport students to and from school, field trips and extracurricular activities as well as the sites where those activities take place. The Principal should be notified of any such concerns and complete a Confidential Report of an Allegation of Child Abuse in an Educational Setting.

Confidentiality Policy: School employees are required to preserve the confidentiality of any and all records containing personally identifiable information of students. Student records are confidential by virtue of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), state privacy laws and other laws and regulations. School employees may not disclose personally identifiable information about school students unless they have been given clearance by the Principal and are certain that the disclosure is permitted by law. All student records maintained in the central school office as well as in individual teacher's classrooms must be secured at all times. Only those employees with a legitimate need for access to a student's records may access such records absent written parental permission. Therefore, absent a special reason, only faculty members who provide instruction or other services to a student should have access to his/her records. In addition, school employees who have access to social security numbers of school personnel are required to preserve the confidentiality of such information and only disclose the information for legitimate or necessary business purposes.

School Calendar and Holidays: Each year the school will establish a school calendar that complies with the New York State Education Law relating to compulsory attendance. DIRT Charter School has discretion with regard to the dates of attendance. Unless exempted by the

Principal, all staff are expected to be in attendance on all days indicated by the school calendar, including Summer Professional Development.

Weather Days and Other Closings: The School may be closed due to inclement weather or other situations. An orderly process for notification of public media outlets shall be developed and implemented when necessary. At the discretion of the Principal, any days lost to closure due to inclement weather or other reasons may be made up during or at the end of the school year.

Military Leave: Members of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard, Reserves or Public Health Service will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for military service, training or related obligations in accordance with the Unified Services Employment and Re-employment Act of 1995 (USERRA).

Attachment 8b: Resume for Proposed School Leader

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School has not yet identified a proposed school leader.

Attachment 10: If applicable: Replication Strategic/Business Growth Plan

Not applicable: DIRT Charter School is a new independent charter school and does not have a replication strategic/business growth plan.