



June 22, 2012

Sally Bachofer
Assistant Commissioner for School Innovation
NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue, Room 475 EBA Albany, NY 12234

Dear Ms. Bachofer:

I submit this **Letter of Intent** to establish the Newburgh Preparatory Charter High School in Newburgh, NY, on behalf of our Founding Group and our proposed Board of Trustees.

I. Applicant Information

- a. Lead Applicant: Thomas J. Fitzgerald, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]—retired teacher/administrator,
educational consultant, community resident
- b. Media Contact: Maryann Fitzgerald (English)
mfitz1055@aol.com / 845-564-7493
Ramon Vega (Spanish)
rvegarealtor07@aol.com / 845-496-9773
- c. Founding Group:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relevant Experience/Skills</u>	<u>Current or Prospective Role</u>
Thomas J. Fitzgerald	Retired School & Central Office Administrator, Educational Consultant	Executive Director
Maryann Fitzgerald	Retired Elementary Teacher	Volunteer—Reading & Math Basic Skills
Mindy Ross	VP Orange County Community College Newburgh Campus, Experience in Alternative Education	Board Member
Neal Goldstein	Former Business Executive, Retired High School Math Teacher	Director of Finance
Ramon Vega	Former Special Education Teacher and Administrator/Supervisor for At-Risk Students, Retired NYC Supervisor for Probation, Family Court & Adult Services, Real Estate Agent	Board Member

Jack Caldwell	Retired Teacher and Administrator, Operations Manager of Black Rock Forest Consortium	Volunteer Internships Coordinator
Beverly Woods	Middle School Teacher, Former Alternative School Principal	Board Member
Danette Shephard	Social Services Programs Consultant	Board Member
Karen Mejia	Aide to U.S. Congressman Hinchey, Community Organizer, Consultant	Board Member
Runston Lewis	Newburgh Enlarged City School District Board Member for 22 years	Advisor

d. Proposed Board of Trustees:

James Kulisek—Business Executive, Former Orange County Legislator

Phil Mehl—Certified Public Accountant

Karen Mejia—see above

Joy Pittman—City of Newburgh Youth Services Coordinator

Harold Ramsey—Newburgh City Court Judge

Mindy Ross—see above

Danette Shepard—see above

Ramon Vega—see above

Beverly Woods—see above

e. Replication or Network Information: NA

f. Application History: NA

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. Proposed School Name: Newburgh Preparatory Charter High School

b. Proposed School Location: The Newburgh Enlarged City School District
Orange County, NY

c. Planned Grades and Enrollment in Each of the Years of the Proposed Charter Term:

Credits/Grades	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
0-5 (9 th gr.)	20	30	30	30	30

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6-10 (10 th gr.)	20	30	40	50	60
11-15 (11 th gr.)	30	45	60	75	90
16-21 (12 th gr.)	35	50	75	100	125
Totals	105	155	205	255	305

d. Proposed Partner Organizations:

Newburgh Preparatory Charter High School (Newburgh Prep) is collaborating and will collaborate with many community organizations but will not have a partner.

e. Proposed School Mission:

Newburgh Prep will provide over-aged and under-credited students 16-21 years of age living in the Greater Newburgh, NY, Area—including students living in poverty, students who are English language learners, and students with special needs—the opportunity to return to school and, with intensive social-emotional support, to obtain a high school diploma through a rigorous NYSED standards-based education program that prepares them for college and career.

f. School Overview:

Newburgh Prep’s program includes: 1) a school year of at least 215 days; 2) a school building open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. each school day; 3) classes in session from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 3) online computer access; 4) for students with fewer than 11 credits, an Intensive Intervention Program of academic and social-emotional growth supplemented through collaboration with TEAM Newburgh; 5) for students with 11 credits or more, an Internship Program; a College-Readiness Program developed in collaboration with Orange County Community College; and a Visual and Performing Arts Program developed in collaboration with the Newburgh Performing Arts Academy and Safe Harbors; 6) a professional learning community of staff members that meets daily from 3:30 to 5 p.m.; 7) intensive training during the summer of 2013 in data culture, classroom management, differentiated instruction, the Workshop Model, balanced instruction, and blended learning; and 8) a week-long summer institute for staff in August.

To meet the needs of these students, Newburgh Prep will provide an intensive social-emotional component to supplement the educational program. In addition to four core credits per semester, physical education and health, and art embedded in community projects, students will have a 55-minute advisory each day during which counseling services, tutoring and homework help will be available, including development and ongoing review of each student’s individual learning plan with a mentor. The advisory experience is designed to get to the root of each individual student’s needs and will provide a differentiated level of counseling and an opportunity for academic and social-emotional growth.

g. School’s Target Population and the Community to Be Served

New York State has ranked the City of Newburgh the fifth highest stressed city in the state based on the number of single mothers, poverty, drug culture, gang affiliation, abandoned buildings, unemployment, and level of education. One-third of adults over 25 years of age lack a high school diploma. In the year 2010-2011, 207 high school students (15%) did not graduate. In 2009-10, 240 (23%) did not graduate (NYS School Report Card). Persistent generational poverty and lack of education contribute to the desperate need for a charter school of this kind.

The City of Newburgh, with a population of 28,866 (2010 U.S. Census), is a largely ethnic, immigrant community of people from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central and South America (49.6%) with an African-American community (30.2%) and a European-American community (20.4%). In 40.4% of households a language other than English is spoken. A majority of residents earns less than \$35,000 a year. Many adults lack not only a high school diploma but also have less than a 9th grade education. Officially, 63% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch with some resistance at the secondary level to completing the application. All Newburgh schools qualify for Title I.

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

The published graduation rate of the Newburgh Enlarged City School District is 61%. Newburgh Prep will target its outreach to enroll students who have not graduated (39%), including 48% of African-American students, 38% of Latino students, and 24% of European-American students. In addition, 42% of these students have an IEP and 26% are ELL.

Conservative estimates put the number of 16-to-21-year-old high school dropouts on the city streets of Newburgh at between 1200 and 1800. There is no alternative or transfer high school in the Greater Newburgh Area.

We plan to reach potential students through their parents and people who care about them. That process has already begun. In addition, there is a rigorous enrollment plan to reach the African-American and Latino communities--in their homes, in their churches, in their community organizations, in their places of business, and in the streets--for which the Founding Group has already recruited key helpers in each community.

We will also arrange for traditional enrollment advertising in the local newspapers both English and Spanish, and we will distribute English and Spanish flyers in locations where people will see them. We will continue to obtain signatures from community members in support of the school, as well as letters of support from prominent community members. We have already reached a level of recognition in the community, and we will continue to build on that. We feel confident that the growing recognition of the opportunity created by Newburgh Prep will lead to reaching anticipated enrollment.

Newburgh Prep, therefore, will be able to enroll 105 students in Year 1, the maximum number that will offer the best chance of success. With each year's success the school will grow in enrollment at a measured rate. After four years, when the enrollment is 305 students, the school will be addressing a sizeable percentage of the need and will begin to have a larger impact on the community. We are confident that, with a caring staff that addresses both the academic and social-emotional needs of our students through the program described, our students will respond, and we will retain the numbers projected.

IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

The first step in the enrollment and retention plan is to build community support. This effort began with a series of articles published in a local weekly newspaper called the *Mid Hudson Times*. In addition, two news stories with photos about the efforts to establish Newburgh Prep appeared in the *Times Herald-Record*, the daily newspaper with wide circulation. We have met with a number of prominent people and local organizations, including the Newburgh Enlarged City School District Superintendent and the Superintendent's Cabinet; the Board of Education president and the Board (100% support); the president of Orange County Community College; the Mt. St. Mary College Education Department; the Newburgh Area Retired Teachers Association; the leadership of the Kaplan Career Academy; the Newburgh Performing Arts Academy; Safe Harbors; TEAM Newburgh; the Newburgh Branch of Orange County BOCES and students who attend the GED Program there; the Black Rock Forest Consortium; the Newburgh City Council and other local politicians including the mayor, our local state senator, and our local congressman; the Armory Unity Center; the Liberty Partnership Program; the Gateway Program of Catholic Charities; Latinos Unidos; and the local chapter of the NAACP.

Two community meetings were held, one in English and one in Spanish, to determine interest and support for such a school in the community. In connection with promoting these meetings, a concentrated effort was made to distribute information about the meetings and the school to churches, beauty salons, barber shops, laundromats, retail stores, and people on the streets of the City of Newburgh. Information about the meetings was printed in the two local weekly newspapers, in the daily newspaper, and in newspapers that serve the Latino community. Such meetings will continue. At each opportunity members of the community were asked to sign a petition showing support for the need for such a school. Through these efforts the Newburgh Prep Founding Group has been able not only to gain community support but also to spread the word about the services of this school. All have agreed that there is a need for such a school.

We are eager to share our complete proposal with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Fitzgerald
Lead Applicant