

**Seneca Allegany Charter School
Letter of Intent
Submitted to New York State Department Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue
Room 471 EBA
Albany, New York 12234
Email: charterschools@mail.nysed.gov**

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June 22, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Chuang:

This is to serve as a letter of intent from the Seneca Allegany Charter School Board to apply for a charter during the second round of applications leading to a school opening in the fall of 2013 at the Allegany Territory.

Applicant Information:

Lead Applicant: The Lead Applicant for the Seneca Allegany Charter School is Robert O. Porter, Esq. President Porter's mailing address is [REDACTED] His email address is [REDACTED] and his mobile phone number is: [REDACTED]

Media Contact: Heather Redeve Rozler, M. Ed. Allegany Education Director, [REDACTED] 716-945-1790

Board of Trustees: The school's founding board of trustees is comprised by the following individuals:

Robert O. Porter, J.D Chair – Trustee Porter is a citizen of the Seneca Nation of Indians (Heron Clan) and earned an A.B. degree from Syracuse University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. He has served as a member of the tenured law faculty at the University of Kansas, the University of Iowa and Syracuse University (currently on leave) and served terms with the Seneca Nation government as Attorney General, and Senior Policy Advisor and Counsel, prior to being elected as the Nation President in 2010. For 20 years, his personal and professional interests have focused on the revitalization of indigenous nations and tribes through legal, educational, and economic means. He is uniquely qualified to provide the leadership necessary to coordinate community members and resources, secure funds and personnel, and ensure the success of a high quality charter school.

Chanda Grey – Ms. Grey earned a B.A. in Psychology at St. Bonaventure University, a Ms.Ed. in Counselor Education from St. Bonaventure, an Advanced Specialization in School Counseling from St. Bonaventure; and is currently working on her Ph.D. in psychology through Grand Canyon University. She is the Assistant Education Director at the Allegany Territory also in charge of coordinating a variety of educational programs aimed at enhancing the educational opportunities for students on the Territory.

Darlene Miller - Mrs. Miller is a resident of the Allegany Territory and grew up in Red House NY. She attended elementary school at Red House, attended Salamanca High School and, received her Associates Degree in Business Administration from SUNY Empire State. She's been a resident of Salamanca, NY all of her life. She served on the Head Start Parent Committee and as Chairperson for the Higher Education Committee for the Seneca Nation several terms. She has also been a Board Member for the Faith Keeper Survival School for many terms.

Sarah John - Ms. John graduated from the Salamanca City Central School District in 2000 with honors. She attended the State University of New York at Buffalo and plans to continue her education in Business-Business Administration. She is currently employed at the Seneca Nation of Indians in the President's Office. Ms. John has been a strong advocate within the community to support the rights of children and has been a parent advocate for the rights of parents within the public school setting. She has been the voice for families when they were not strong enough to use their own.

Gerald Musial – Earned B.A. in International Relations with a minor in World Development Studies from San Francisco State University and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Western Washington University. He has 15 years teaching experience ranging from grade 6 through community college. He has worked with the Seneca Nation Education Department on a variety of projects to support

cultural awareness and understanding within the public school setting. Mr. Musial currently teaches within the public school setting where he teaches Seneca History and Global History. He also serves as one of the advisors for the Salamanca High School Model United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Sandra Johnson – Ms. Johnson earned a B.S. in Psychology at Empire State College, a M.Ed. in Education at Lesley College, a M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Psychology at Vermont College of Norwich University, a Ph.D. in Education from Walden University, and a M.S.W. in Social Work at Marywood University. She is currently an Assistant Professor with the State University of New York, Empire State College.

Lesley Hoag – Ms. Hoag is the Outreach and Retention Coordinator for the Career Development Department at Seneca Gaming Corporation. Prior to joining the Career Development Department, she was a consultant for Healthy Community Alliance in Gowanda, NY. Lesley’s educational background is in Business and Organizational Leadership. She currently is pursuing her doctorate at the University of Phoenix for Management of Leadership. Lesley volunteers her time towards building a stronger community. She is an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Turtle Clan.

Jessica Ludwick - Jessica Ludwick (Heron Clan) grew up in Allegany and is an alumnus of Salamanca High School. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Niagara University in Hospitality Management. It was at Niagara that Jessica was able to learn about international travel and prepare herself for the global environment. She is currently employed at the Seneca Gaming Corporation for Human Resources as the Career Development Coordinator. As a representative of Career Development it is her mission to develop education, personal commitment and experience through training and empowerment.

Application History: N/A This is the first request to be permitted to present an application for the second round due on July 18, 2012.

Proposed Charter School Information

Proposed Name and Location: The Seneca Allegany Charter School will be located within the Salamanca, NY School District.

Grade Levels and Student Enrollment:

The following table illustrates the enrollment plan for the Seneca Allegany Charter School for the five-year charter period.

Grades	Ages	Number of Students				
		Year 1 2013	Year 2 2014	Year 3 2015	Year 4 2016	Year 5 2017
K	5, 6*	25	25	25	25	50
1	6, 7	25	25	25	25	25
2	7, 8	25	25	25	25	25
3	8, 9	0	25	25	25	25
4	9, 10	0	0	25	25	25
5	10, 11	0	0	0	25	25
Total Students		75	100	125	150	175

*Students in Kindergarten must turn five years old by December 1st, 2013 in order to be eligible to enroll in the Seneca Allegany Charter School

Management and/or Partner Organizations: Not Applicable

Proposed School Mission:

The Seneca Allegany Charter School will provide students with a rigorous education that will uniquely prepare them for success whether they select to pursue a traditional college career or avail themselves of opportunities in advanced technical fields. The Seneca Allegany Charter School will

accomplish this mission by focusing on Common Core State Standards derived from the highest college and career readiness expectations.

Proposed School Overview:

The Seneca Allegany Charter School will follow a school-to-career transition model while enhancing it with the high expectations represented by the Common Core's approach to defining school requirements based on what colleges and industry consider to be effective readiness. The result will be ensuring that a population that has experienced significant challenges in pursuing meaningful career paths becomes empowered with the readiness skills that will open the widest array of possibilities imaginable. In developing our design, the Seneca Allegany Charter School Board has reviewed a number of effective school-to-career and college and career readiness initiatives in charter, districts, and private institutions. We have based our design on a variety of elements from these schools. Among these, our design borrows significantly from the approach taken by the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Kenmore, New York. This is not a call for replication. CSAT will not have a formal role in the execution of our design. At the same time, we feel that the design elements being adopted by the Seneca Allegany Charter School are bound to succeed given that they have been proven effective at CSAT. Besides readily sharing information important to the development of this application, CSAT has agreed to make staff available for the required initial professional development.

Beginning in Kindergarten, our school will present students with information about a wide array of careers to both make the educational process relevant and to engage students in their options from an early age. Seneca Allegany Charter School will offer Seneca Language instruction to all students starting at the elementary level and will introduce a world language at middle school stage. Language instruction will be provided through second language acquisition lessons plus sheltered immersion opportunities via fine arts classes in which certified art teachers will be paired with Seneca native speakers who are also knowledgeable in traditional art forms. Also, the history and culture of the Allegany Territory, including that of the Seneca Nation, and its impact on the economy and culture of the United States will be infused throughout the curriculum.

Seneca Allegany Charter School will improve student learning and achievement by using a proven educational design that aggressively aims at filling student's achievement gaps while challenging all students to meet high standards. The school design will improve student achievement by focusing on learning, meeting the needs all students, providing differentiated instruction, providing multiple opportunities to learn, and providing timely interventions.

A Focus on Learning

Each classroom will employ two teachers to work with 25 students per grade. One member of each team of two teachers will be knowledgeable in special education and/or literacy intervention strategies. Using common planning periods and teleconferencing technology, each grade level team will "meet" within the school and with teaching teams at CSAT. For each instructional unit, these teams will collectively select essential learning standards and develop a common assessment for these standards. After teams select the essential learning and agreed on a common evidence of learning, individual teachers will be allowed a great deal of latitude in the delivery of instruction provided that all techniques and methods are scrutinized once the assessment data is available. In other words, the effective practices are not predetermined, but they become evident upon data analysis. Thus, our design focuses on learning rather than teaching, on outcomes rather than compliance with rigid input.

Teams will be formed by grade level and/or subject matter in all grades to focus discussions and to make decisions specifically from their common formative assessments. The purpose of classroom

assessments is to assist teachers in knowing and understanding the impact of instructional decisions on student achievement. Teams will take time to identify and “unwrap” essential standards to isolate the crucial concepts and skills.

Teachers will coach and challenge each other to ensure that any assessment of student learning is also serving as an assessment of the quality and degree of teaching strategies. Intentionally creating tools for common formative assessments ensure that incorrect choices or distracters offer insight to gaps and misconceptions. Teachers will be able to teach with a more focused interventional approach. This process increases consistency in content taught as well as learning. Teachers will be able to see for themselves where students are prior to instruction, during, and after. Interdependent grade level teams will then meet around data constantly to evaluate student progress, different teaching strategies, and to set goals for themselves as well as their students.

Differentiating Instruction

It is recognized that students learn in different ways. Seneca Allegany Charter School’s instructional program is designed to address these varied learning styles. Because research clearly favors certain instructional methods over others, Seneca Allegany Charter School provides professional development and supports teams in choosing methods that assessment data prove most effective. Nevertheless, the truly effective strategy is one based on data from work rather than a predetermined set of strategies.

Multiple Opportunities to Learn

With the development of a focus-on-learning approach, teachers will respond by providing additional support to those students who did not show sufficient evidence of learning and also by questioning their original instructional methods. Beyond individual practice, teams will rely on a systemic approach to providing students with multiple opportunities to learn. Traditionally, schools are organized with the same opportunities for all students and different expectations for different groups. Seneca Allegany Charter School’s mission turns the equation around by having the same high expectation of all students while providing different groups with a variety of opportunities to meet the standards.

Furthermore, Seneca Allegany Charter School will implement a no-zero policy. Rather than accepting failure on a specific task and/or in mastering a specific standard, students who fail the task or the assessment are required to avail themselves of every intervention available and have the opportunity of being re-assessed until the time the standard is met. Once the standard is met, the grade reflects said mastery and not an average of the different attempts.

Timely Interventions

Teams will meet weekly together to create, grade and analyze targeted common formative assessments using a data-management software, eDoctrina®, which provides immediate and specific feedback for teachers to diagnose and address gaps in learning. This frequent directed effort in common formative assessment allows teachers to clearly understand which students need specific interventions. After the results are analyzed, goals are set, and strategies are agreed upon, teachers at Seneca Allegany Charter School will use a variety of interventions, including some non-traditional uses of time. Reports are generated that offer detailed information related to skill or concept gaps present in student work. The teams then collaboratively focus their discussions around interventions.

Target Population:

According to NYSED Demographic data for the Salamanca School District, 36% of the student population is classified as American Indian and 59% as white. Fifty six percent (56%) is eligible for free or reduced lunch. The district has not been able to meet AYP for students with special education designation and this population has a significant overrepresentation of American Indian students. This

fact, coupled with the documented interest among this population for a public choice alternative makes us feel confident that the school will recruit students with disabilities at a rate comparable, and most likely greater, than the number enrolled in local schools. Salamanca does not meet AYP in secondary ELA. There is no significant number of ELL students. The Seneca Elementary and Salamanca Middle Schools are placed on improvement accountability status. In 2010-2011, percentage of grades 3-8 students meeting proficiency levels in ELA ranged from 31% to 52%. In math, the range is between 39% and 58%. Students with disabilities will be served in accordance with federal and state regulations including section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (and amendments thereto, at 29 USC Section 794 et seq. and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR Section 104), and the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act ("IDEA" at 10 USC Section 14010 et seq. and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR section 300). An appropriate and free education will be provided to such students in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs (IEP), as required by the IDEA, and 504 plans as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the most recent Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA).

Enrollment and Retention of Students

Seneca Allegany Charter School will admit students without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, disability, or socio-economic background. To ensure that we reach our enrollment level and that we satisfy enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program, our school will directly mail out an information packet to all households with students entering grades K-2. In addition, all below mentioned community support activities will serve the dual purpose of general recruitment efforts.

Public Outreach and Community Support

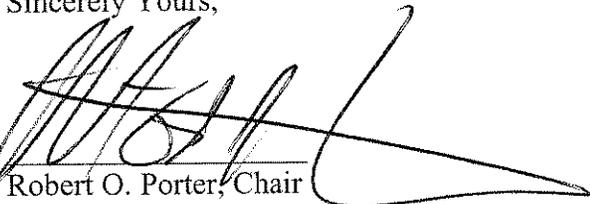
The Seneca Allegany Charter School Board has been working aggressively to do public outreach about our school and to solicit community input regarding our school. To date, we have held information meetings on April 11, 2011, June 22, 2011, on July 7, 2011, on June 12, 2012 and we will be having another community meeting on June 28, 2012. We have plans to continue holding community meetings as well as discussions with community parents, stakeholders and organizations. In addition, we have set up an information website so the community can access information about the school and provide comments/feedback about the school.

We have received nothing but positive comments and feedback about the school and we believe that the community is excited about our school and is ready to apply for admission once our charter school is approved. We look forward to submitting a full application. We welcome your comments and feedback.

Attachment

Recruitment Brochure

Sincerely Yours,



Robert O. Porter, Chair
Seneca Allegany Charter School