

**LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY**

**Date of Submission:** August 15, 2012

**I. Applicant Information**

**a. Lead Applicant Information:**

Virginia Montague



**b. Media Contact:**

Danna M. Wood Webb, Esq.

[webbwebbwood@aol.com](mailto:webbwebbwood@aol.com) (914) 371-2925

**c. Members of the Applicant Founding Group**

**Conrad Graves, PhD**, Proposed Board Member, Chairperson. Dr. Graves is a retired Professor and Harlem community leader for over 40 years. He is the former Chairperson of the Department of Social Work at Kean University and the President of the Central Harlem Inter-Agency Programs Inc. Dr. Graves has a deep understanding of the social, health and developmental needs of students.

**Virginia Montague**, Proposed Board Member, Lead Applicant. Ms. Montague is a long time Harlem resident, a political consultant, and community activist for over thirty-five years and former President of The New York Coalition of 100 Black Women.

**Selvin R. Osbourne, M.P.A.**, Proposed Board Member, Finance Committee. Mr. Osbourne is the Chief Financial Officer for Public Interest Projects, Inc and has extensive experience managing not-for-profit financial agencies for over twenty years.

**Stephen Whitter**, Proposed Board Member, Finance Committee. Mr. Whitter is Vice President-Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors. Earlier, as President, Tampa Bay Men's Club, his organization developed a mentoring program for elementary, junior high and high school African American males.

**Danna M. Wood Webb, Esq. MSW. JD.** Proposed Board Member, Legal Committee. Ms. Wood Webb has substantial experience as a social work educator and is currently a practicing Attorney.

**Brenda Smith, Ed.D.**, Planning Team Member. Dr. Smith retired as School Superintendent, after serving 40 years as an educator. She also worked as Deputy Personnel Director of Harlem Hospital Center. She is presently an NGO (Non-Governmental) Representative to the United Nations.

**Arnette F. Crocker, Ed.D.**, Proposed Board Member, Education Committee. Dr. Crocker is the Founding Principal of Women's Academy of Excellence High School in the Bronx, NY and was a member of the original planning team for this single gender school.

**Belinda K. Amoako, M. Phil.**, Proposed Board Member, Education Committee. Ms. Amoako is an Assistant Principal in a New York City high school and former Academy Director in a chartered K-8 School in the Bronx, NY. Her specialties are in Special Education and Mathematics. She is presently pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Education at CUNY Graduate Center.

**Andrea Lawrence, M.S.Ed., M.S. Special Education.** Proposed Board Member, Education Committee. Ms. Lawrence is an Assistant Principal of a middle school in the Bronx, NY. She is presently pursuing a Ph.D. in School and Educational Leadership.

**Kordai I. DeCoteau, D.P.M.**, Proposed Board Member, Education Committee. Dr. DeCoteau serves the Harlem community by providing lectures on Health and Wellness to children and parents. She is a mentor in the Rites of Passages program for young children.

**Maxine Johnson-Harris, M.S.LIS, M.S.Ed.SDA, M.Div.** Proposed Board Member, Education Committee. She is the Founding Principal of the 2002 High School for Teaching and Professions, Bronx NY. Mrs. Johnson-Harris was a member of the planning team for Bronx Leadership Academy High School II.

**d. Proposed Board of Trustees-** Potential Board of Trustee members are indicated above, except Brenda Smith, Ed.D.

**e. Replication or Network Information-** N/A—the school is not a replicated school.

**f. Application History:** The application was submitted in 2010 and 2011 and was withdrawn each year.

## II. Proposed Charter School Information

**a. Proposed school name:** Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School

**b. Proposed school location:** NYC CSD 5

**c. Planned grades and enrollment**

Grades	Age-Range	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
6	10-12	125	125	125	200	200
7	11-13		120	120	150	200
8	12-14			120	120	200
Total		125	245	365	470	600

**d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s):** N/A

**e. Proposed School Mission**

The mission of the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School (DMPCS) is to provide a rigorous and progressive educational experience for middle school students in Central Harlem focused on scholarship, health and leadership. Our vision is for all of our students to graduate from middle school and enter high school prepared to demonstrate academic excellence and to participate as active leaders who will promote good health and wellness in themselves, their community and beyond.

**f. School Overview**

Dr. Muriel Petioni graduated with a B.S. from Howard University in 1934 and from Howard University Medical School three years later. In 1950, she opened a private practice in Harlem and maintained this practice for forty (40) years tirelessly serving the Harlem community. A medical doctor, educator and community activist, she worked diligently to ensure that underserved communities receive proper medical attention and equitable access to healthcare.

Petioni served for thirty years as school physician in Central Harlem for the New York City Department of Health. Her pioneering spirit and steadfast commitment to excellence in the medical profession and her dedication to serving the Harlem community was the iconic force behind the concept of the Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School. Dr. Petioni challenged community leaders to ensure that the children of the Harlem community received the best care physically, mentally, medically and academically. It was on this principle that the charter school was founded. Historically, the health disparities in the Harlem community have been described by health professionals as reflective of those disparities found in an underdeveloped country. The morbidity rates among the Harlem adult population have continued to exceed the levels in similar urban communities in heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, influenza and

pneumonia. In more recent years, significant health disparities have had a major impact on the school community where children at the elementary levels and above are plagued by high rates of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. It is based on these alarming and continuing trends in the Harlem community that the DMPCS deems health education necessary as a crucial component of the curriculum. The DMPCS approach to learning will be engaging, collaborative, experiential and performance based. This approach will support and develop the three pillars on which the school was founded:

- **Scholarship**: to champion student academic success and advance post secondary education, preparing all students for admission into the high school of their choice
- **Health**: to collaborate with Harlem YMCA, Harlem Hospital and other community organizations such as Mentoring Medicine to support students in developing healthy habits that will be a gateway to their success mentally, physically, socially and academically.
- **Leadership**: students will demonstrate their leadership skills through their involvement in health focused community service activities, citizenship projects and collaborative relationship with the world-renowned Schomburg Center.

DMPCS will engage families and students and initiate the academic development process during enrollment, where we will administer diagnostic assessments and begin developing individual student development plans and targeted interventions prior to and during our summer bridge program. Teachers will engage in on-going professional development to provide students with a rigorous core curricula aligned with the Common Core Standards. They will facilitate student exploration of essential questions, investigation and analysis of real world problems using an interdisciplinary project-oriented curriculum of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). We understand that students may come to DMPCS with deficiencies in various areas and we will provide the necessary intervention services and programs necessary to support their individual needs. By individualizing instruction and having a talented, supportive, dedicated staff working in a nurturing environment, DMPCS will be prepared to address student deficiencies in the classroom and in the external environment. DMPCS will create an environment that is nurturing and supportive of students academically, mentally, physically and socially, that will lead them to academic and developmental success.

#### **g. Target Population**

The school will target the students in the Central Harlem Community because of the health disparities and the low performances in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The Community District 5 (CD5) did not make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in Mathematics for the 2010-2011 and will be identified as a DINI (year 1) if it fails to make AYP for the 2011-2012. Additionally, CD5 identified by NYSED as a District In Need of Improvement (DINI) in ELA for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 (Year 5). On the NYSED ELA and Math tests in grades 3-8 for 2010-2011, performance data indicates that students in Community District 5 still lag behind the City. According to the NYSED, the demographic in which the school is located the tested students in ELA, and Math, 56% were Black, 38% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 2% White. Looking further into the student demographics, the percentage of ELL students is 11% and the percentage of students with disabilities is approximately 25%. The percentage of students considered economically disadvantaged is approximately 94% with 74% who are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

### **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**

DMPCS will engage in a focused effort to enroll English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (SWD), and those eligible for free and reduced lunch program (FRPL). Staff will contact coordinators, administrators, and teachers in Harlem-based elementary schools for recommended enrollment. Planning team members will continue to bring awareness to the students and families we intend to serve by speaking at various community venues (community centers, churches, district community board meetings, elementary school PTA meetings). The media will also be used to bring awareness of the DMPCS' mission and vision. The Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School website, <http://www.petionics.org>, is being revised to reflect our present school proposal. Our aim is to inform parents/guardians of children with special needs that our school will welcome and support their individual needs while providing them with a well-balanced and relevant educational experience. All communication materials will be in multiple languages that are synonymous with our community of Spanish and French speakers. Materials for our community of Africans who share several dialects will be translated with the assistance of language-based organizations and institutions.

DMPCS staff will seek the assistance of the appropriate language speaking community-based organizations to help us in our communication efforts.

DMPCS will provide a strong academic program designed to meet the needs of all learners and engages them in active learning. We will work with groups to build a strong supportive program as a first step in retention. Such groups as Advocates for Children will help assure that we are recruiting, designing and implementing programs for students with special needs. Including the African Services Committee, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and independence of the African community in New York City, will further support our efforts in recruiting, serving, and retaining English Language Learners.

DMPCS will provide the resources and support for students with special needs in accordance with Federal and State regulations including 504 plans, IEP plans, and LEP/ELL mandates. Our school will offer Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) when needed and ESL services in implementing a more inclusive program. DMPCS teachers will discuss students' academic achievements and design learning plans to support them. Teachers and/or Counselors will meet with parents/guardians to discuss their child's progress report. Teacher generated assessments, differentiated instruction, after school tutoring and/or mentoring, and summer enrichment programs will be implemented. We will connect our parents with available resources to aid them in monitoring their child's educational experience at DMPCS. In addition to our "hands-on" approach with parents/guardians, we will develop an online system for posting students' progress, attendance, achievements and other relevant information.

### **V. Public Outreach and Community**

The Dr. Muriel Petioni Charter School began as a grassroots movement initiated by a meeting sponsored by the Central Harlem Inter-Agency Program, a community based organization and Region 10 of the NYC Department of Education where elected officials, appointed officials, religious leaders, business leaders, students and parents were invited to attend and discuss issues of concern regarding the educational needs of this community. Based on the students' assessment of their educational needs and the lack of the school system to adequately address these issues, a

planning team of education and community leaders came together to assess the interest in developing a charter school in Central Harlem.

Community Board #10 and District 5's Community Education Council support the proposed creation of the DMPCS based on their experiential and statistically supported knowledge of the disparities that face the students in Central Harlem. They welcome an educational setting that will support student academic achievement. The proposed school is enthusiastically supported by every elected official representing the Harlem community including Congressman Charles B. Rangel, former Governor David Paterson (then State Senator), former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, State Senator Bill Perkins, State Senator and Minority Democratic Senate Conference Leader John Sampson, Assemblyman and Manhattan County Leader Keith Wright, and City Council member Inez Dickens. Community leaders Hazel Dukes, President of NY State NAACP, Rev. Al Sharpton, Baptist minister, civil rights activist and television/talk show host, the Harlem YMCA, the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, Columbia University School of Public Health, Harlem Hospital, all enthusiastically support the school.

Sustained and continuous events of community outreach, participation and communication are critical to achieving our charter goals. We will continue to have town hall meetings open to the Central Harlem community with the first scheduled for July 5, 2012. A multi-language survey will be presented to the attendees for feedback. Revised press releases will be sent to local community based newspapers. We will collaborate with WHCR, a local radio station based at City College that broadcasts directly to Northern Manhattan to schedule interviews with planning team members. Revised literature about the school will be distributed at grassroots organizations such as tenant association and block association meetings, local health and business fairs, social media networks, etc. A special effort will be made to reach underserved families in the community such as immigrants from West Africa and other African communities. Flyers and literature in African languages and notices in African newspapers will be distributed through their individual social networks. Because of the reticence by these communities to reach out, a concerted effort to establish a relationship with them will be accomplished through their leaders. An on-going effort to keep the community informed will be an accomplished through updating our social media outlets and contacts with other charter, elementary and parochial schools in the Harlem community.

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Danna M. Wood Webb, Esq., Authorized Representative

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Date