

Letter of Intent: Applicant and Media Contact Form

Created Monday, January 28, 2013

Updated Tuesday, January 29, 2013

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All applicants seeking to establish a charter school authorized by the Board of Regents to open in 2014 must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply, which requires completion of this applicant and media contact form, and an upload of your 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply as outlined on pages 14 of the 2013 RFP and Application Kit. Please submit these tasks by 5:00 PM on February 1, 2013. Applicants who do not submit a complete Letter of Intent to Apply by this deadline will not be permitted to submit a Full Application.

a. Proposed Charter School Name

(Please write out the formal and full name for the school you proposed, and include the words "charter" and "school" in the proposed name).

Infinite Horizons Charter School

Whether submitting an application in Round 1 or Round 2, all new charter school applicants seeking public space in New York City must fill out a "Request for DOE Space" by January 31, 2013. The Request Form can be found at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHNTYVFueWd4RWhmLW5CNHBqV>

b. Preferred school location.

Select the preferred geographical area on the left and then select the preferred school district or community school district on the right.

Upstate School Districts: Rochester City School District (not BOCES)

Select a second geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

Upstate School Districts: Rush-Henrietta Central School District

If necessary, select a third geographical area on left and then select the school district or community school district on right.

None

c. Applicant(s) information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address, and information establishing that the applicant(s) is a parent, teacher, school administrator or community resident.

(The entire chart may not be visible on your screen. Use the "tab" key to move from column to column. The first column will remain static as you do so).

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address	Street Address, City, State, Zip
Lead Applicant	Karen Iglesia	585-436-3170	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Co-Applicant

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Community Resident

d. Media Contact: please provide a phone number and/or email address to which public inquires about the proposed charter school may be addressed.

	First and Last Name	Best Phone Number (###-###-####)	Email Address	URL (type web address or the word "none")
Media Contact	Wandah Gibbs	585-436-3170	wgibbs@iglesiaeducation.com	www.iglesiaeducation.com

e. Planned grades and enrollment in each year of the proposed charter term.

	Ages (or age ranges)	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
K	4-6	40	40	40	40	40
1st	6-7	40	40	40	40	40
2nd	7-8	0	40	40	40	40
3rd	8-9	0	0	40	40	40
4th	9-10	0	0	0	40	40
5th	10-11	0	0	0	0	40
6th	11-12	40	40	40	40	40
7th	12-13	0	40	40	40	40
8th	13-14	0	0	40	40	40
9th	14-15	0	0	0	40	40
10th	15-16	0	0	0	0	40
11th	0	0	0	0	0	0
12th	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ungraded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		120	200	280	360	440

f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner.

(See pages 36-39 of the application kit for definitions and guidance as only "significant" partnerships should be listed here).

f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner. Proposed Management Company	(No response)
f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner. Partner Organization 1	(No response)
f. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s), such as a charter or educational management company or a university, academic program partner, or whole school change partner. Partner Organization 2	(No response)

Thank you for completing the Applicant and Media Contact Form which will be duplicative of some information contained in your letter of intent. Having information in this form allows the Department to merge applicant contact information into our existing data system. Please proceed to upload your signed and dated 5 page Letter of Intent to Apply.

Letter of Intent to Establish Infinite Horizons Charter School

January 31, 2013

New York State Education Department Charter School Office
89 Washington Avenue, Room 471 EBA
Albany, NY 12234

I. Applicant Information

Ia. **Lead applicant:** Karen Iglesia

Mailing address: [REDACTED]

Phone number: (585) 436-3170, [REDACTED]

Karen Iglesia is a 25+ years resident of the Rochester community. Her passion and commitment to urban youth has been demonstrated since before she began tutoring students in her basement 15 years ago. She has served over 30,000 students from the Rochester and CNY areas, and has spearheaded numerous initiatives to enhance the academic and life success of students.

Ib. **Media contact:** Wandah Gibbs

Phone number: (585) 436-3170 / Email: wgibbs@iglesiaeducation.com

Ic. **Applicant founding group** (**next to name denotes also an initial board of trustees member*)

Both the applicant founding group and the initial board of trustees are comprised of community stakeholders with an array of talents from fields including education, teaching, administration, finance and accounting, development, non-for-profit, community and family engagement.

Karen Iglesia has worn a variety of hats in the education field for almost 20 years. Ms. Iglesia is a former SAT Instructor/Adjunct Professor for SUNY Brockport Rochester Educational Centers, Director of Education and Development for Baden Street Settlement, and teacher for the RCSD Teacher Opportunity Program. She established Iglesia Educational Centers in 1996, and has overseen its growth into a thriving tutoring, instructional and educational consulting business. Her affiliations include Urban League Black Scholars Program and National Society of Black Engineers. Karen's leadership position in the charter school will involve motivating and mentoring students, and using her community connections to create internship opportunities.

Tricia Skwieralski has worked within the Rochester community for 14 years in the municipal, non-for-profit and private sectors. She has managed municipal grant programs in excess of one million dollars for community projects. In the non-profit sector she has secured funding from state, city and private entities for community development initiatives. She manages, writes and monitors compliance for all grants, contracts and budgets at Iglesia Educational Centers. Tricia's position in the school will include grants, procurement, reporting and development.

Richard Carter* has dedicated himself to the education field for close to 20 years. He will bring a breadth of skills and insight deriving from his experiences as a teacher and administrator. Richard is also certified in Bry's Behavioral Mentoring and as a School District Leader.

Tom Brennan* has served on three local school boards: Hilton SD, BOCES and Rochester City School District. He is a proponent of maintaining focus on the schools, including instruction, intervention, and authentic parent involvement. Tom is a certified adult literacy tutor, and has worked in Washington DC as a speechwriter, journalist and consultant.

Bobby Maldonado's* leadership, problem-solving and collaborative skills are reflected in his unique distinction of having held key leadership positions in the NYS, county and city public

safety sectors. After retiring from the NYS Police and serving as Deputy Chief of the Rochester Police Department, Bobby also served as Jail Superintendent of Monroe County. He is presently the Director of Campus Safety for Nazareth College.

Olivia West*, head of West Advisory Group, has an extensive background in finance and accounting. Recognizing that financial literacy is a key for personal success and community growth, West specializes in promoting financial literacy for youth in urban school districts.

Linda Mazzeo* is an engaged community member, parent and volunteer. She is an advocate for both the elderly and children, particularly those with special needs. Linda’s first-hand experience navigating bureaucratic structures has ensured needs are met for these populations.

Wandah Gibbs, a Newhouse Scholar, specializes in public relations and inter-cultural communications. She is director of media relations for Iglesia Educational Centers. She develops community programming including Hillside Work Scholarship, and RIT STEP programs. She is a Public Relations Society of America member. Wandah’s charter school role involves program development, public and community relations, media, and event planning.

Kerron Miller’s background in finance and accounting includes payroll management, bank reconciliations, budgeting, and asset management. At Iglesia Educational Centers, Kerron has monitored site operations, program budgets and payroll processing for 250+ staff. Kerron’s charter school role will involve financial components, such as accounting, auditing and payroll.

Kimberly Banks brings a business-minded organizational approach to the applicant group. Having education and career experience in business management, her expertise includes records and data management, and establishing protocols for maintaining up-to-date and accurate documentation. Kim will assume a charter school role of main office or operations manager.

d. Proposed members the school’s initial board of trustees (*credentials noted above*):

Richard Carter, Tom Brennan, Olivia West, Bobby Maldonado, Linda Mazzeo.

e. Replication or Network Information: Not applicable.

f. Application History: Not applicable.

II. Proposed Charter School Information

a. Proposed school name: Infinite Horizons Charter School (IHCS)

b. Proposed school location: The school will be located within the Rochester City School District. It is to be determined whether the charter school facility will be a private building space, or rented from the Rochester City School District.

c. Planned grades and enrollment in each of the years of the proposed charter term.

The charter school’s first year of operation is planned to include Kindergarten, 1st grade and 6th grade. Each grade level will have 40 students enrolled (i.e. two classes of 20 students each), with a total planned first year enrollment of 120 students. Each proceeding year, two additional grade levels will be added, so that at the end of the five-year term, the school will service students in K-10th grade, and will eventually grow into a K-12th grade school.

Projected Enrollment over the Charter School Term					
Grades	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
K	40	40	40	40	40
1st	40	40	40	40	40
2nd		40	40	40	40
3rd			40	40	40
4th				40	40

5th					40
6th	40	40	40	40	40
7th		40	40	40	40
8th			40	40	40
9th				40	40
10th					40
Totals	120	200	280	360	440

d. Proposed Management and/or Partner Organization(s)

Infinite Horizons Charter School is not planning to contract with a CMO, nor have a formal partnering organization. However, Karen Iglesia has joined an emerging initiative through Nazareth College to further inspire and interest students in STEM majors, which is envisioned to serve as a “pipeline” between the charter school’s STEM skilled students, and the college. Karen will work with stakeholders including Horace Smith, Associate VP of Student Support Programs, and serve as a liaison between Rochester city schools and the college, with the aim of exposing and recruiting more black and Hispanic students to STEM-related majors. Select students will be eligible for full scholarships to the college

Discussions are underway regarding partnering opportunities by applicant group members within their networks of existing partners and possible future partners that include:

- Rochester City School District
- City of Rochester
- Monroe County Department of Social Services
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection
- Greece School District

e. Proposed school mission: To educate, empower, and instill confidence in the students of the community while delivering a traditional education in a non-traditional world, providing college and career planning, teaching life skills, and nurturing the gifts and academic strengths of the individual student.

f. School overview: A brief description of the school model, especially any innovative design elements that might require specific expertise to evaluate during the review process.

Infinite Horizons Charter School aims to educate and prepare students for success in life by cultivating the unique gifts and strengths of the individual student. This involves increasing the number of urban youth that graduate from high school and go on to either college or a career. The school calendar will go beyond the 180 day school year, with a 190-200 day school year. The school day hours will be from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm to better accommodate students and parents. The school’s first year of operation includes Kindergarten, 1st grade, 6th grade, and eventually will grow into a K-12th grade school.

The school will promote traditional educational values within a contemporary technological age. So that students are poised to achieve success in the 21st century, the school will incorporate an emphasis in the STEM disciplines. According to the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in science, NYS 8th graders showed little to no signs of progress, demonstrating that today’s students are not advancing as needed to be competitive in today’s global economy. Further, in 2008-2009, just 10.2% of college degrees and certificates conferred in NYS were in the STEM fields (10.7% nationally).

Early STEM exposure for elementary students will be included to build a strong foundation from the start. Infinite Horizons Charter School will address the need for increased class time spent on the sciences. According to the U.S. Department of Education School & Staffing Survey, the

number of weekly hours spent on sciences has dropped to 2.5 hours per week since 1994. Evidence, such as the aforementioned NAEP science assessment, suggests that students engaged in hands-on activities in science classes perform better on the exams. Hands-on activities with a STEM/engineering focus will be part of the curriculum for all ages. The charter school will work to cultivate the interest in STEM for students of all ages, and from all facets of society.

Additional components of the school are to include:

Transitional programs and Saturday programs including February and April breaks for students at Level 1 & Level 2. Curriculum and activities programs will be primarily determined by examining student performance trends, and focus on test taking strategies in high need areas.

College and career tracks for students identified as college bound and career bound.

SAT Prep will be provided to increase knowledge, confidence and performance on the exam.

Youth development and life skills: seminars and workshops will include social norms, public speaking, workplace etiquette, proper attire and dining etiquette and financial literacy.

A **National Society of Black Engineers Pre-College Initiative (NSBE PCI)** component for 6th graders includes traveling, networking and black tie events. NSBE PCI is designed to stimulate interest in the STEM disciplines, and encourage students to pursue technical degrees.

A **community service**, as part of Participation in Government requirements, to emphasize the value of civic engagement, and as a resume booster for students when applying for scholarships

A **non-traditional sports program, including** lacrosse, golf, rugby.

g. The school's target population and the community that the school intends to serve:

Infinite Horizons Charter School seeks to welcome all students of the Rochester City School District (RCSD) including those at risk of academic failure. The RCSD includes approximately 32,000 students in pre-K through 12th grade, including students from 28 countries speaking 35 different languages. According to District website data, the student population has the highest poverty rate among the NYS Big 5 districts. The RCSD has also been designated a NYS Focus District, having either the lowest achieving students or the lowest graduation rates for a particular student group.

Infinite Horizons Charter School welcomes the opportunity to provide district students of all backgrounds and abilities with the support and resources necessary for school and post high school success. A snapshot of RCSD student performance data for Grades 3-8 on the 2011-2012 ELA and Math exams reveals a district and student population in crisis. RCSD student performance on the ELA exam was the worst of the Big 5 districts, with just 21% of students meeting or exceeding standards. Further, 27% of students met or exceeded standards on the Math exam, tying at the bottom with Syracuse in terms of Big 5 performance.

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.

Integrating the charter school into the broader community will be a key in the school's recruitment, retention, and overall success for all student populations. Parental and guardian involvement is also a must. There will be a parent education/training component to the school, along with events to make the educational experience a real "family affair". Other strategies include innovating internships, and extracurricular and transitional programs.

The charter school will promote and ensure that students with disabilities and English Language Learners receive accommodations and language assistance, including but not limited to bilingual

teachers and materials, translators for parents, special education teachers, sign-language interpreters, materials in large type, tape recorders and Braille editions, instruction consistent with IEPs and or 504 plans as applicable and per all guidelines. A cornerstone of Karen Iglesia's commitment to serving all community students has been a partnership with Monroe County's immigrant program, whereby over 200 refugees from countries such as Sudan, Guatemala and Haiti have received tutoring and other assistance.

The lead applicant's history of recruiting and retaining District youth for educational programs, including a large proportion of those eligible for free and reduced lunch, support the charter school's ability to reach anticipated enrollment and retention targets. Hands-on recruitment and retention of urban youth are large components of Iglesia's philosophy and success with students. Over a six year period, Iglesia's NCLB SES tutoring program was consistently either the largest or second largest NCLB program in the RCSD, with over 4,000 of the approximately 5,000 students enrolled receiving tutoring. Over 75% of enrolled students received 45+ hours of tutoring annually. Iglesia's summer programs have attracted and retained literally hundreds of students. All students will have the same opportunities to participate in school offerings.

Other efforts to be utilized include:

- Word of mouth / Iglesia alumni network
- Home visits, neighborhood canvassing
- Community meetings & sporting events
- Bilingual materials
- Billboards
- Flyers
- Bus wraps
- School expos
- TV appearances

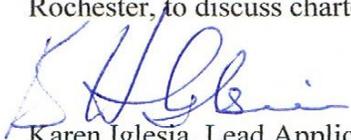
IV. Public Outreach and Community Support

a. Describe public outreach conducted to date to solicit community input:

The lead applicant's relationships and success with so many parents and students have culminated in the public prompting her to open a charter school. In November 2009, Iglesia hosted a forum of 150+ community stakeholders including principals, administrators, teachers, school board members, city leaders, family and friends to discuss the needs of RCSD students. It was determined that there is a need for a charter school that focuses on STEM disciplines, meets the social and emotional needs of the child, and uses engineering projects and sports programs as inspiration for a life of academic success, physical fitness and confidence building.

Her intention to open a charter school is featured on the Iglesia Educational Centers website under "News and Events," www.iglesiaeducation.com. A recently featured article in the Rochester Business Journal, November 2nd, 2012, outlines Iglesia's far-reaching impact on local students, indicates: "Iglesia plans to open a STEM charter school that starts with kindergarten and first grade. She and her advisers are forming a board and will notify the state of their intent, aiming to open in 2014-15." <http://www.rbj.net/article.asp?aID=193075>

Infinite Horizons Charter School has an active website www.infinitehorizonscharterschool.com. A survey has been distributed to parents of RCSD students, and feedback is currently being analyzed. There are plans for additional media coverage, focus groups and a public forum is scheduled for February 2nd, 10 am at the Iglesia Educational Centers, 72 Thurston Road, Rochester, to discuss charter school vision, and solicit additional public input.



Karen Iglesia, Lead Applicant
January 31, 2013