

Letter of Intent: Applicant and Media Contact Form

Created Friday, February 01, 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).

The Harlem STEAM Academy (A Big Picture 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.

NYC CSD-Manhattan: CSD 5

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

NYC CSD-Manhattan: CSD 4

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

NYC CSD-Manhattan: CSD 6

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	Carlos Moreno	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Co-Applicant	Sarah Bacon	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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

(Multiple responses permitted)

- Current or former Teacher
- Current or former School Administrator
- 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	Rodney Davis	401-752-3442	rdavis@bigpicturelearning.org	www.bigpicture.org

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
1st	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rd	0	0	0	0	0	0
4th	0	0	0	0	0	0
5th	0	0	0	0	0	0
6th	0	0	0	0	0	0
7th	0	0	0	0	0	0
8th	0	0	0	0	0	0
9th	14-23	125	143	143	143	143
10th	0	0	161	161	161	161
11th	0	0	161	161	161	161
12th	0	0	161	161	161	161
Ungraded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		125	626	626	626	626

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 – THE HARLEM STEAM ACADEMY (A BIG PICTURE SCHOOL)
February 1, 2013

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Lead Applicants: Carlos Moreno, [REDACTED] and Sarah Bacon
[REDACTED] Submitting on behalf of Friends of Big Picture New York

Media Contact: Rodney Davis, rdavis@bigpicturelearning.org, 401-752-3442

Planning Team and Board members:

- **Nada Ahmed**, Proposed Board Member – 12 years of instruction and leadership experience in high-need urban schools both in the United States and internationally. She has a Ph.D. in Education Research and Policy, and has worked as a leadership coach, instruction specialist and consultant to schools.
- **Sarah Bacon**, Sustainability Advisor – Sustainability consultant with 10 years of issue campaign design, advocacy and cause marketing for environmental, humanitarian, and cultural groups.
- **Nirvani Budhram**, TBD – Experienced educator proficient in strategic planning, growth strategy, policy, government affairs and communications. Extensive experience directing and managing data-driven projects in the fields of education, technology and banking. Accomplished in establishing replicable models for new school design, start-up, improvement and growth.
- **Andrea Hauge**, Proposed Board Member – Finance professional with experience in the energy industry and foreign exchange markets. She received her BA at Columbia University, where she also received her MBA. Since 2008, she has worked at Credit Suisse as an investment banker and more recently in foreign exchange sales. She previously served on the board of Columbia University's Alumni Association.
- **Haviva Kohl**, Proposed Board Member – Experienced education activist and social entrepreneur. She has started multiple schools in emerging markets and taught middle school in the South Bronx. She currently serves Director of the Leadership Pipeline for the NYCDOE.
- **Claudia Merson**, Proposed Board Member – 20 years experience as educator, librarian, and program and curriculum developer. Currently Director of Public School Partnerships at Yale University. She serves as the University's representative to the New Haven community. She has established a broad array of sustainable programs and partnerships between Yale and the New Haven Public Schools.
- **Charles Mojkowski**, Program Consultant – Independent consultant with more than 35 years of experience. Senior Associate at Big Picture Learning, where he contributed substantially to the original design and implementation of The Met School, Big Picture's highly innovative school in Providence, RI.
- **Joshua Morales**, Proposed Board Member – Former NYCDOE official with over 10 years experience in the education sector. He also serves as an education consultant with background in school development, education policy, operations, organizational management, capacity expansion, strategy and finance.
- **Carlos Moreno**, Proposed Board Member – National Director of School and Network Support, with over 13 years of experience as teacher, principal, Director of Schools and School Development. He manages the Big Picture Learning network with over 60 schools nationwide.
- **Jeff Palladino**, TBD –Assistant Principal at a NYCDOE high school with experience in staff and program development, curriculum design, educational leadership and technology, and youth services.
- **Andrea Pizziconi**, Facilities Advisor – Real Estate Developer and CFA, 12 years international experience in education development, mixed-use urban development, and financing of mixed-use education projects.
- **Al Sylvia**, TBD –Deputy Executive Director of the iZone360 whole-school-redesign project within the Office of Innovation at the NYCDOE. He has over 15 years of experience in progressive education as a teacher and school leader. His association with Big Picture Learning spans a decade.

- **Elliot Washor**, TBD – Co-founder and co-director of Big Picture Learning. He has been involved in school reform for more than 35 years as a teacher, principal, administrator, consultant, producer and writer. His work encompasses school design, pedagogy, learning environments, and education reform.

Network Information:

The Harlem STEAM Academy’s program and curriculum designs are based on the highly successful design developed by Big Picture Learning (BPL), which serves as the foundational pedagogy and professional development service provider for more than 90 schools throughout the US and overseas. The BPL design includes several distinguishing features and components, including Personalized Learning Plans (PLP), project-based learning focused on students’ interests, internships and other out-of-school learning opportunities, blended learning, performance assessments, and strong parent and community engagement. This design has been used in public schools, and both in-district and independent charter schools.

Josh Morales is currently the Executive Director of Bedford Stuyvesant New Beginnings and sits on the boards of Democracy Prep School and St. Hope Leadership Academy. Elliot Washor currently sits on the Board of a Big Picture Charter Management Organization in California.

Application History: The applicant has not previously submitted a charter application in or outside NY State.

II. PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Proposed School Name: The Big Picture Harlem STEAM Academy

Proposed School Location: Community District 5, Harlem

Planned Grades and Enrollment for Each Year: Grades 9-12

Enrollment Projections:

Grade	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
9	125	143	143	143	143
10		161	161	161	161
11			161	161	161
12				161	161
Total	125	304	465	626	626

The Academy intends to start in 2014 with approximately 125 students in grade 9, phasing in additional grades in the following three years so that the Academy is in full operation by year four. The completed high school will serve approximately 626 students. In year 2 (2015), it will launch a night school option in order to accommodate currently enrolled students who might otherwise dropout due to economic circumstances requiring they work and also to encourage students who have dropped out of other programs to re-enter the school system. The night school will consist of two classes of 18 students each with the exception of freshman year, which shall have one class, as there may be lower demand for night school among freshman.

Partner Organization: None

Proposed School Mission:

The Academy will prepare its students to be citizen-scientists, competent and comfortable in using science, technology, engineering, arts and math to address real-world challenges they discover in their lives and in their communities with the following goals for each student as targeted outcomes representing this mission:

- Graduate with a diploma indicating readiness for success in postsecondary learning and work, particularly in pursuing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts (and design), and math) careers.
- Graduate with a plan for pursuing postsecondary learning and a career.
- Graduate with acceptance from at least one postsecondary learning program.
- Have an opportunity to graduate with a recognized certificate or some form of endorsement that verifies that the he or she is ready for work in a specific STEAM career area.
- Graduate as an engaged and informed citizen prepared to contribute to the community.

School Overview:

The Harlem STEAM Academy will:

- Use individual interest and project-based learning as the instructional strategy in all courses, modules, projects, and workshops, as appropriate.
- Employ multidisciplinary approaches to addressing challenges, drawing on STEAM disciplines.
- Provide flexible time structures to allow students sufficient time for deep practice to ensure proficiency on essential learning standards.
- Encourage students to apply innovative skills to all courses, modules, projects, internships and workshops.
- Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate competence, including real-world demonstrations and products that provide evidence of skill and understanding.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to get out of school into industry, community, and postsecondary settings in order to work with adults in the fields students aspire to enter.
- Provide opportunities for students to use a wide variety of general and specialized technology tools (both high- and low-tech) to support their learning and work.
- Encourage and support students in thinking and acting entrepreneurially to address personal as well as community needs and challenges.

The Harlem STEAM Academy will aim to serve:

- Students with academic skills below grade level and those at risk of dropping out of high school.
- Students whose academic needs necessitate a small-school environment with personalized attention.
- Students whose academic needs are not being met in a traditional school environment.
- Students who feel disenfranchised within the traditional program of education.

The Academy will address all academic, career, and life competencies like any other high school. However, this work will be nested within STEAM careers. While many students will not necessarily pursue a specific STEAM career, they will be required to address academic, career and personal competencies within those areas. For those students who wish to develop specific competency sets in STEAM careers and industries, the Academy will assist them in obtaining certifications and other forms of recognition in their selected careers.

While open to all students, the Academy will prioritize recruiting underserved, low-income students. On average, across Big Picture's network of 60 schools, most of the students served are in the U.S. demographic groups least likely to complete high school (85% of BPL schools receive Title I funding; 66% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch). The Academy will follow the same recruitment strategy and expects to meet similar targets at a minimum. That said, the Academy's design and commitment do not preclude the admission of any type of student including high-achievement students given the personalized learning model.

III. ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION

The Academy will conduct admissions via lottery and expects to draw applicants who are representative of the total population of high-school age youth in the community to be served. As stated previously, the Academy is

particularly interested in serving students who have not had previous success in school. This population often includes students with learning disabilities, English language learners, and children from poor families. To ensure we reach the targeted population, the planning team has already begun to collaborate with youth empowerment groups such as the Allah Youth Center in Mecca, which is a non-religious youth empowerment organization with 45 years of service to the neediest young adults in Harlem. These youth groups will further support the Academy's recruitment efforts, as we have an aligned mission to serve the same youth. The planning team will also continue to organize concerts and other festive events in Harlem to attract youth and their parents to learn about Big Picture and its new STEAM Academy in their community.

All students will be assessed prior to enrollment. If a student is two grade levels or more below, and/or the student scores Far Below Basic or Below Basic on tests, an intervention plan will be developed as part of the student's Personalized Learning Plan, which is prepared by the student, parents, and advisor. Student progress will be reviewed every six weeks and the PLP will be adjusted as necessary to help the student meet the learning goals. Intervention programs designed to help bring identified below grade-level students up to grade level may include: tutoring and/or computer assisted instruction in mathematics, language arts, and reading.

The Academy will provide an academic, social, and emotional safety net to address academic and non-academic needs for students who enter school with significant barriers to learning. With regard to emotional support, the advisory model allows teachers to track with the same students for four years as their advisors, providing a deep level of engagement with students and their families to address emotional issues that may arise during a student's Academy experience. Students' mentors in their LTI experience provide the students with substantial support to develop essential social-emotional skills. Furthermore, the combination of the advisor and mentor provides two highly engaged adults who will invest in the students across their four years to provide a deep level of social and emotional support as trying circumstances inevitably arise. BPL schools also engage with parents about 11 times per year, a substantial investment by the Academy in the entire family of each student. Regarding academic support, it is likely that many entering ninth graders will have significant achievement gaps, particularly with respect to literacy and numeracy skills. Many students, previously unsuccessful in their former schools, will require extraordinary support to succeed in the career pathway of their choice. Other students who enter the Academy will be above average intellectually, but have experienced school failure because they did not find their previous schools engaging. The BPL personalized learning model will re-ignite a student's passion for learning and allow them to explore their interests at their own pace, which may be much faster than a traditional classroom in the case of intellectually advanced students.

Students' literacy and numeracy skills will be enhanced through direct classroom instruction, work group activities, small group workshops, online learning, and targeted individual projects. Assessments will be conducted early in the school year to measure literacy and numeracy levels as well as non-academic variables that serve as indicators in predicting student success in high school and post-high school endeavors. Gaps in these measures will be targeted for intervention and support.

The Academy's support services system [AP1] will include an intervention team--teachers, a social worker and an administrator--that will meet regularly to review students whose behavior or progress manifests some difficulty. That team will develop the appropriate interventions (school based counseling, social service direction, judicial or mental health assistance) that address the non-academic student needs that are a prerequisite for all students being ready and able to learn. Some students will enter the ninth grade with mental health, behavioral, and unresolved family issues that impede their learning and development. Many of these students may have experienced these barriers to learning without appropriate support.

The Academy will use an expanded "Response to Intervention" (RTI) approach to address the academic, career, and social-emotional needs of students on multiple levels. The system will "catch" students at each stage of need through observation and diagnostic or benchmark assessments in order to provide appropriate

intervention, such as 90-120 minutes per week of one-on-one targeted, research-based intervention instruction by a member of the Academy's Instructional Support Team (IST). This intervention will involve the family as a level of support and intervention.

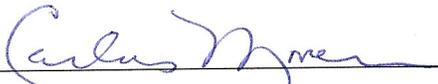
Because we will have a responsive and engaging program that meets students where they are, addresses their holistic needs as young adults and supports them to succeed in a personalized manner, we expect to have a high retention rate among ELLS, special education students, and students eligible for free and reduced lunch. As a comparison, Big Picture has 60 schools across the country in mostly high-needs urban centers, and levels of retention average about 91%. Moreover, the night school will give students an opportunity to remain enrolled and work during the day, if their circumstances require.

IV. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Throughout Big Picture's extensive network of schools, not a single school is the same, each one having been carefully shaped around the needs of the community it serves. The Academy will follow in that tradition to ensure that the final school design has been heavily informed by the feedback of the four main stakeholder groups: target students, teachers, parents, and non-school affiliated members of the community. The following initiatives have been either completed or are being planned for the coming months:

- A survey that includes questions for all four stakeholders has been created and will be available online. The survey has been translated into French and Spanish and is being distributed in hard copy to the community through canvassing neighborhood businesses, including the African Diaspora.
- The planning team began a series of focus groups targeting each stakeholder groups beginning on January 16th, 2013. Fifteen young people participated; most had either dropped out of the system or recently graduated from public schools, but had not been able to advance to college or secure jobs. The planning team will hold approximately 6-10 focus groups in the next six weeks.
- Planning team members continue to meet with key community stakeholders to discuss the school and solicit feedback. To date, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and Councilmember of the 7th District Robert Jackson have written endorsement letters, with additional letters expected to be obtained.
- The Academy's planning team conducted its first fundraiser and community outreach event on January 23, 2013. Community stakeholders representing various groups attended the benefit jazz concert.
- A website has been established to introduce the Academy to the community and keep community members informed of the planning team's progress.
- Site visits are planned to bring key stakeholders to visit other Big Picture schools in the Northeast, where they can see Big Picture Learning in action. Additional site visits for stakeholders will be organized locally to highlight Big Picture's existing work in New York at the Bronx Guild and Perkins Academy.

Since the planning team has begun its community outreach efforts in Harlem, we have received enormous interest from teenagers and parents involved in youth empowerment groups like the Allah Youth Center in Mecca that, for the last 45 years, have been serving the same target population the Academy aims to serve. The positive response of such groups, including their youth and leadership, to this proposal is an overwhelming indication of the need for the Academy's learning philosophy in Harlem for these young adults.

Co-lead Applicant Signature:  Carlos Moreno Date: 2/1/13

Co-lead Applicant Signature:  Sarah Bacon Date: 2/1/13