

## **New York State Education Department**

### **Summary of Proposed Charter**

#### ***Summary of Applicant Information***

**Name of Proposed Charter School:** Ross Global Academy Charter School (RGACS)

**Address:** To be determined

**Applicant(s):** Megan Silander (lead applicant); Jennifer Chidsey, Robert Durkin (co-applicants)

**Anticipated Opening Date:** September 6, 2006

**District of Location:** New York City – CSD 1/ Region 9

**Charter Entity:** Chancellor, New York City Department of Education

**Institutional Partner(s):** Ross Institute  
RGACS will also form a partnership with New York University (NYU).

**Management Partner(s):** None

**Grades Served:** K, 1, 5, 6 and 9 (K-12)

**Projected Enrollment:** 180 (500)

#### **Proposed Charter Highlights**

##### **Applicant(s)**

- Megan Silander is the lead applicant; the co-applicants are Jennifer Chidsey and Robert Durkin. Ms. Silander is an Education Associate with the Ross Institute; she holds a M.Ed. from Harvard's Graduate School of Education, has been a volunteer with the United States Peace Corps in Namibia, and has worked at both the Board of Education and the Evaluation and Training Institute in Los Angeles, California. Ms. Chidsey is the Director of Education and Outreach and the Ross Institute. Mr. Durkin is a Project Assistant at the New York University Equity Assistance Center/Metrocenter.

##### **Institutional Partner(s)**

- The institutional partner is the Ross Institute for Advanced Study and Innovation in Education (RI). Founded in 1996, the RI is a non-profit entity that will provide the RGACS with the following: Ross Model curriculum, support in implementation of the curriculum, instructional support, professional development services, technical assistance and quality assurance. RI will also provide the School with fundraising and

development support. RGACS will become the first charter school to join the network of Ross Model Schools.

RGACS will also maintain a close relationship with the New York University's Steinhardt School of Education (NYU). NYU will provide the School with connections to the New York City community with the expectation to leverage resources outside the School and to develop and recruit an active and effective Board. Support from NYU that will be provided to RGACS include the following: tutors, student teachers, tuition vouchers for RGACS faculty, access to the NYU library, support for the early-to-college program, consulting, board representation, opportunities for participation and collaboration on research and education projects, and collaboration in school design.

### **Management Partner(s)**

- None.

### **A. Curriculum/Assessment/Instruction**

- The Ross Global Academy Charter School states its mission is, "To transform the way education prepares students for the future. Through systematic interdisciplinary instruction, built upon deep knowledge of the disciplines and commitment to fundamental skills, immersion in worldwide cultural history and current world events, intercultural dialogue, and fluency in new technologies."
- RGACS states it will "provide instruction in skills and content in each discipline to provide the foundation for interdisciplinary understanding, the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and the incorporation of multiple intelligences approach."
- The RGACS teaching techniques will reflect Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences.
- RGACS states it will offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that is aligned with NYS Learning Standards, for intercultural understanding taught through an integrated approach to connect multiple subjects through a cultural history core.
- RGACS will provide programs that promote self-directed learning, collaborative problem solving, responsibility as well as the exploration of individual interests.
- RGACS will provide instruction and experiences with communication and media technologies.
- RGACS will design learning spaces to foster learning, collaboration, positive relationships and mutual respect and responsibility.
- RGACS will offer students additional support through elective classes and summer, Saturday, and after-school sessions; RGACS's extended day and Saturday program will be required for all students; the extended year will include 222.5 days.
- RGACS will offer students, in grades eleven and twelve, the opportunity to take college level courses and to qualify for an Associate's degree upon graduation.
- The education program will include a holistic approach to nutrition, health, and well-being.
- RGACS states it will foster innovative pedagogy through professional development for teacher and administrators to emphasize team teaching, collaborative learning, globalization and learning, multiple intelligences, differentiated instruction, strategies

for ELLs and other strategies needed to meet the needs of the School's population of students.

- RGACS states it will offer heterogeneous groupings and experiences to reflect its belief in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), to educate students without labels and to provide a free appropriate education for all; RGACS also states it is committed to an inclusive approach to education that encompasses all students.
- The RGACS will offer an inclusionary academic program that will be both "push-in" and "push-out;" the School expects to educate students in accordance with their Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- The School will use qualitative and quantitative data to assess student performance, including City and State exams, portfolios, formal written exams, and essays.

## **B. Governance**

- The RGACS Board of Trustees will provide stewardship for the School's financial, organizational and educational resources.
- The Board will monitor and evaluate regularly the performance of the Ross Institute and the School's relationship with NYU's Steinhardt School of Education.
- A position on the Board has been designated for one parent, for a member of the School staff and for additional community members.
- The School's President will be the main point of contact between the School and the Board and will be responsible for institutional advancement, financial operations, and external relations with the community.
- The Director will be responsible for curriculum and instruction and the day-to-day School operations.
- Ross Institute and NYU will serve as advisors to the School and to the Board.
- The initial eight-member Board will be expanded; it shall not be fewer than five (5) and shall not exceed fifteen (15).
- Trustees will be elected to serve terms of three (3) years, except that the term of any Trustee who is a parent of a child enrolled at the School or the designated representative of any partner organization shall be one (1) year.
- A Trustee's term of office shall not be extended beyond that for which the Trustee was elected.
- A minimum of 10 regular meetings shall be held each year.

## **C. Students**

- RGACS will serve 180 kindergarten, first, fifth, sixth and ninth grade students in the first year and 500 kindergarten through twelfth graders in year five; as the School enrollment grows to capacity, the number of students in each grade will grow by 20-student sections so that overall grade level size increases by 20 students over the previous grade level.
- RGACS has built several entry grade levels into the School's admissions model, with the largest number of students entering in grades K, 5 and 9.
- Each grade will be composed of sections made up of 20 students.
- RGACS seeks to serve students from diverse backgrounds with a variety of academic abilities, including students with special needs and English Language

Learners (ELLs); the School anticipates that at least 12% of the student population will be ELLs and approximately 10-12% will have special education needs.

- RGACS anticipates the ethnicity of students will be heavily Latino, Chinese and African American.
- The School anticipates that a number of students will enter below grade level.
- The students will be selected by a blind, random lottery. Preference will be given to students living in the New York City School District. Students with siblings enrolled in the school receive preference over waiting list candidates who do not have siblings enrolled.

#### **D. Budget/Facilities**

- RGACS plans to lease space from an existing New York City Department of Education (DOE) school facility with rent costs of \$1 annually.
- The School anticipates being located in the Lower East Side of Manhattan.
- The School has provided a contingency budget; RGACS states, “The impact of paying for a lease would be hugely detrimental to the School program and culture. The substantial amount of resources required for lease payments would materially detract from the vision and mission of the School, and brings into question the ability of the School to meet the ambitious outcomes that have been set for the students.”
- RGACS anticipates receiving a \$632,500 loan from the Ross Institute; \$245,000 in the start-up year, \$200,000 the first year and an additional \$187,500 year two; the School assumes to begin repayment of the loans beginning in year 3 with an annual amount of \$75,000.
- RGACS anticipates receiving \$50,000 in-kind consultant in the start-up year from NYU.
- RGACS assumes a New York State stimulus grant of \$50,000 for the first three years.
- RGACS assumes the payment of licensing fee to the Ross Institute and funds to pay for curriculum, implementation of the curriculum, professional development services and quality assurance.
- RGACS has budgeted to receive a \$90,000 start-up grant as well as additional supplemental funding from the City of New York at \$391 per elementary school pupil and \$443 per middle school pupil, and \$475 per high school pupil enrolled on an annual basis.

#### **E. Personnel**

- RGACS will hire a president and a director whose combined year 1 salary will equal \$220,000.
- In year 1, the School will hire 9 general education teachers, 1 special education teacher, four specialty teachers (art, music, physical education and ELL), and three teaching assistants (one to assume the role of parent advocate).
- In year 5, the School will hire 25 general education teachers, 4 special education teachers, 10 specialty teachers, and 4 teaching assistants.
- The School will hire one social worker in the first year, one guidance counselor in years 2-4.
- The School will hire one business manager to assist the Director for Operations.

**F. Fiscal Impact**

- When fully enrolled with 500 students, the RGACS will take .029% of the District's budget (see Potential Fiscal Impact Chart below).
- Programmatic and fiscal audits will comply with all requirements of public schools. The School will employ a New York State licensed public accountant or certified public accountant to perform the fiscal audit. In addition, the School will ensure that the audit is conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) issued by the U.S. Comptroller General.

**Potential Fiscal Impact of  
Ross Global Academy Charter School  
(New York City CSD 1/Region9/Lower East Side/Manhattan)**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Projected Payment*</b>	<b>Projected Impact</b>
<b>2005-06</b>	180	\$1,785,592	.0099%
<b>2006-07</b>	320	\$3,317,233	.0179%
<b>2007-08</b>	440	\$4,766,449	.0249%
<b>2008-09</b>	500	\$5,660,158	.0287%
<b>2009-10</b>	500	\$5,914,865	.0291%

\*Assumes a 3 percent annual increase in the district's budget from a 2004-2005 base of \$17 billion and a 4.5 percent annual increase in the average expense per pupil, per year from the 2004-2005 final average expense per pupil of \$9,084.

**G. Community Support**

- RGACS has collected 291 parent signatures from interested parents whose children will be entering kindergarten and first, fifth, sixth and ninth grades in September 2006.
- Letters of support have been submitted from the following persons:
  - Mary Brabeck, Dean, The Steinhardt School of Education
  - Michael H. Zisser, Executive Director, University Settlement
  - Jayne Godlewski, Principal, Marta Valle Secondary School
  - Jack Lund, President, YMCA of Greater New York
  - Eva Moskowitz, Council Member 4<sup>th</sup> District

**Recommendation**

Approve the application.

**Reason for Recommendation**

1) The charter school described in the application meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations; (2) the applicants can demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; and (3) granting the application is likely to improve student

learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law.