

TO: Jeanne Allen  
Tony Gruebl  
Anna Varghese  
FROM: Carol Beck  
RE: Baltimore applicant update  
DATE: December 4, 2003

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The following provides a brief update on the first round of contacts of potential applicants made in Baltimore.

**Summary:**

Initial contact has been made with 10 leads. Of, these four merit regular contact and support right now, though I will keep tabs on all leads in case there are changes. The four leaders of this group include 3 community groups – 2 are groups of parents with plans underway and one is a committee of a neighborhood organization. The neighborhood organization has expressed an interest in talking with an operator and has already sought preliminary input from Mosaica. The fourth possibility would involve faculty from a highly regarded school for children with language based learning disabilities, establishing a charter designed to meet this needs in the public system. An additional group, which I have not met with yet, would also be community based and a possible candidate to work with an operator.

Additional leads are being followed up on, such as city councilwoman Pugh's personal interest and that of her sorority. Contacts are being made with local community organizing groups, and church based groups to reach a wider community. I am targeting mid – late January for a community meeting to include briefing on charter law, city policy, application and timeline.

Meanwhile, I am having input into the application process, meeting with interested officials and individuals, seeking additional contacts, and gathering information to assist groups.

**Recommendations:**

- Maintain some contact with all of these groups, in accordance with initial assessment below.
  - Develop regular communication and support activities for:
    - Northeast
    - Pamela Jackson
    - Odyssey
    - Patterson Park
  - Maintain some contact with:
    - Canton
    - Coppin
    - Baltimore Curriculum Project
    - Brooklyn Community (around Maree Garnett Farring ES)
  - Assess:
    - Southwest Baltimore
  - Referred to High school program
    - Community Building in Partnership/Youthbuild

- Target meeting in mid to late January to brief interested community groups on state law, city policy and application process.

**Policy comments and questions for this component of the project:**

Timeline:

Given the city's timeline, it is extremely unlikely that a charter school will open in September 2004. However, at least one group is very interested in pushing this and appears to have the capacity to open a school, should they be successful in having an application accepted. It is very feasible that several worthy applications will be submitted and has preliminary approval by the City's Advisory board by the end of the summer. Has the possibility of a second year of this project been considered? Even with a focus on the immediate application process, longer term planning for work on a second round of applicants would be beneficial.

City network:

To build advocacy in the city, there should be networking of all types of charter schools, including New Schools, conversion and other. The types of schools that the state law allows include schools from scratch in a new facility and conversion of an existing school. Operators are to be non profit organizations, though clearly the opportunity to subcontract to an operator is provided. If an operator (for-profit or non-profit or institution such as Coppin) is to take on an existing school, no support is necessary from CER, though keeping informed of any developments in this area is advisable.

City open to range of proposals:

In working with the BCPSS staff on the application process, what is emerging is Janssen being open to all comers, and not setting priorities. I have discussed with her some of the potential applicants I have met and she seems to want the system and the advisory board to be open to the priorities that will come from the community. The key staff will not be recommending, for instance, that any priority be given to certain neighborhoods, or to K-8 and are also interested in neighborhood focused as well as city wide efforts. In the same way there is openness to different arrangements for governance and operation. The initial contacts yield two community based groups which are, as of now, pursuing establishment of 501c3 so that they can form the board and take on full operation of the school. Two others are candidates to work with an operator to implement their vision.

Budget/consultant:

As outreach continues and I start making arrangements for community meetings and technical assistance for groups, I would like to get a more specific idea of what the grant budget might provide. Laura Weeldreyer will be on maternity leave beginning in early January and will be available for some project work. As I try to assess how to make the most of this resource and help Laura plan her availability, it would helpful to understand the broader context of the grant budget and/or if resources will be available from elsewhere in CER's operations.

**Detail on Groups to date:**

Group	Current	Next/Note
1. Canton/ Sylvan/ Living Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting held with Sylvan, Canton Community Group and Living Classrooms staff (operating a New School)</li> <li>• Very preliminary but meeting organized by</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of application for 04 opening: none</b></p> <p>Follow up with Canton group and Living Classrooms. Canton is near</p>

	<p>Frank Riggs because Sylvan is considering how it might get involved in charter. Not considering being an EMO immediately but very interesting in seeing how services it can provide might fit in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living Classrooms is large capable non-profit that just opened a NSI middle school. May be interested in developing an elementary feeder. But board is not near making a decision on this growth.</li> </ul>	<p>Patterson Park – check into these communities working together.  <b>Contact:</b> check in with Riggs, Conrad (Living Classrooms) once a month. Using Crossroads school as possible tour for interested groups. Check on Canton involvement with Patterson Park effort.</p>
<p>2. Patterson Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southeast Baltimore neighborhood group</li> <li>• Targeting a closed Catholic School for development of a charter school.</li> <li>• Group does not have the capacity to acquire and maintain the building. However, BCPSS has 60 day option to consider purchase, which it is considering due to overcrowding at nearby schools. If BCPSS owns the building and agrees to development of charter school, this project becomes feasible.</li> <li>• Committee of about 10 has formed, including head of very capable neighborhood CDC, which may be able to contribute a small amount of funding for early organizing. Committee is weak in that it lacks needed expertise. If it can be strengthened and building issue is solved by system, this project would be a good candidate for outside Operator.</li> <li>• Committee met with Ken Evans (Mosaica) 12/2/03; very general discussion but helpful to the group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of application for 04 opening: low to none</b>  <b>Probability for 05 opening: low - medium</b> (can be changed by building)  Follow up with School System on Building status.  <b>Contact:</b> Maintain regular contact; attend meetings as possible, keep involved in training opportunities; follow up with building status</p>
<p>3. Southwest Baltimore</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents groups forming, has a PhD (u of Baltimore faculty) Midtown Parent who could be a good resource on academics.</li> <li>• Interested in exploring local ES to house the school, and or gradual conversion.</li> <li>• Good idea. Unlikely. The Univ of MD School of Social Work involved in school.</li> <li>• Open classroom design and growing to K-8 – currently has 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Impossible to say if space would be available if renovations occurred.</li> <li>• Principal ok - not great.</li> <li>• Worst performer city wide on Terra Nova.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of Sept 04 opening/conversion: low.</b> First face to face meeting with this group week of Dec 15<sup>th</sup>. Encourage to identify others in Southwest interested (Viva House, nuns, Bon Secour Hospital development arm; umbrella development group)  <b>Contact:</b> Determine after assessment of groups and outcome of meeting with local principal; Consider facilitating meeting with</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/School project not likely.</li> <li>• However, School could be takeover target, as it sits at the very bottom of City ranking of reading/math proficiency.</li> </ul>	AAO, Janssen, and Principal and community group.
4. Coppin State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with Dr. Frank Kober. Follow up meeting set with Dr. Battle, new President, reportedly extremely energetic and interested in school reform.</li> <li>• Coppin is a New Schools Operator of Rosemont, has established several partnerships for that school and raised academic achievement.</li> <li>• Has infrastructure to pursue charter.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness Sept. 04 opening: medium</b> Meeting set with Dr. Battle. <b>Contact:</b> If pursuing operating another school, contact will be minimal. Coppin has capacity and experience.</p>
5. Baltimore Curriculum Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with Dr. Muriel Berkeley, ED and Herb Thomas, COO.</li> <li>• BCP is the operator for 4 schools.</li> <li>• One of these may be dropped due to lack of cooperation from principal.</li> <li>• 3 have significantly improved.</li> <li>• City Springs has moved from the reconstitution eligible list to one of the City's tops performers in most grades.</li> <li>• Interested in taking on restructured school with right authority; and in partnering with interested school.</li> <li>• Would push for 0-based staffing in the contract.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness for Sept 04 conversion: medium</b> Very good candidate for taking on a restructured school. Factors – City/state needs to assign BCP as operator of poor performing school, with full authority. Talk to Janssen about setting BCP up with schools to consider inviting BCP in. (as was done with Hampstead Hill) <b>Contact:</b> If pursuing operating another school, contact will be minimal. BCP has capacity and experience. BCP has support of Janssen, who can facilitate school match.</p>
6. Pamela Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has expressed great interest in conversations with Anna V. and Laura Weeldreyer.</li> <li>• Has begun filing for 501(c)(3)</li> <li>• Has preliminary work completed</li> <li>• Unable to evaluate further until meeting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness for Sept 04: unknown</b> Meeting with Jackson early December. <b>Contact:</b> Need to meet with Jackson first. Regular contact if as organized as represented by Jackson.</p>
7. Maree Garnett Farring ES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal very strong.</li> <li>• Interested in considering charter to gain autonomy of school.</li> <li>• Principal has experience with founding of Midtown.</li> <li>• Will understand the non-profit issues</li> <li>• Highly regarded educator.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness for Sept 04 conversion: None.</b> Principal has autonomy needed with supportive AAO (Area Academic Officer). However, notes that community wants a neighborhood high school. Current</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong relationships with community</li> </ul>	<p>Innovation High School project is only seeking to establish citywide admission schools. Determine feasibility of high school proposal going through charter.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Minimal. Attend community meeting and considering helping community based on depth of support there.</p>
8. Community Building in Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Profit organization in Sandtown Winchester (West side).</li> <li>• Attended Nov 8<sup>th</sup> forum</li> <li>• Operates Youth Build Program; wants to build this into high school</li> <li>• Occupies community center (former school) with space available for program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness for Sept 04: None</b></p> <p>Interested in High School – referred to Innovation High Schools Project</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Minimal. Follow up in Jan to see if link made to Innovation High schools.</p>
9. City Neighbors Northeast Baltimore/ Bobbi McDonald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong parents committee</li> <li>• Expertise on hand includes architect, marketing, curriculum</li> <li>• Knowledge needed - finance, attorney</li> <li>• Good deal of research complete on neighborhood, curriculum, vision, fundraising, fed and state funds</li> <li>• Excellent questions</li> <li>• Church with ample appropriate space willing to negotiate</li> <li>• Establishing relationships with Univ of Maryland, Kennedy Krieger, other.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of Sept 04 start: good</b></p> <p>Largest obstacle is space, have plans, preparing cost estimates.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Regular. Facility is biggest issue but otherwise capacity is strong.</p>
10. Justin Harper, faculty of Odyssey School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in developing public school based on Odyssey success with language based learning disabilities</li> <li>• Odyssey recently moved to new facility in County; owns former school property in City (very large house)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Probability of readiness for Sept 04: unknown.</b></p> <p>Meeting week of 8<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> unknown yet. Possibility of much needed program and available space. Would not need intensive support.</p>

From these contacts and other meetings, new leads will be pursued including:

- Sorority mentioned by Councilwoman Pugh
- Calvert School
- Community group in Brooklyn