

## LETTER OF INTENT

### **NEW DESTINY CHARTER ACADEMY**

**5817 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Meridian, MS 39301  
(601) 693.0602**

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January 16, 2014

#### MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning  
3825 Ridgewood Road  
Jackson, MS 39211

RE: Letter of Intent to Open Charter School

To the Governing Authority:

In accordance with Mississippi Public Charter Schools Act of 2013, Mississippi HB36, please accept this Letter of Intent to submit a petition for the New Destiny Charter Academy, hereinafter "The Academy". The Academy is a two-phase two project which will be located in Meridian, Mississippi. In the first two years, SY2014-2015 and SY2015-2016 the Academy will serve students from grades K-3 and beginning in SY2016-17 it will begin additionally serving grades 4-5.

#### I. CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

- a. Name: New Destiny Charter Academy
- b. Co-Founding Organization(s): Freedom Rock Christian Fellowship Church (FRCFC) and New Destiny Urban Development Corporation (NDUDC)
- c. Grade Configuration: Lower Elementary, K-5
- d. Location: 5817 5<sup>th</sup> Street Meridian, MS 39307 (FRCFC Education Building)
- e. District: Meridian Public School District
- f. Model or Focus: TBA
- g. Primary Contact Person: LaBaron Hedgemon:
  - i. Phone: (601) 466.1143
  - ii. Email: [lhministries@yahoo.com](mailto:lhministries@yahoo.com)
- h. Proposed Head Master: TBD
- i. Replication: No. The proposed New Destiny Charter Academy will be the first charter school co-founded by NDUDC and FRCFC.
- j. Contract with ESP: No.

## II. APPLICANT INFORMATION

### A. Founding Group

The naissance of The Academy is a joint, collaborative effort between Freedom Rock Christian Fellowship Church (FRCFC) and New Destiny Urban Development Corporation, Inc. (NDUDC). Both entities are recognized by the Mississippi Secretary of State as 501c3 organizations in good standing. Founded in 2000, FRCFC is a non-denominational, progressive church that was founded on the principles of integrity, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. With nearly 500 congregates, it has become the fastest growing church in Lauderdale County since 2010. Likewise, NDUDC was founded in 2011 to support the development and ongoing academic, social, and cultural needs of underrepresented families and their children of the greater Meridian area. In keeping with this tenet, in May 2013 NDUDC founded the Camp Destiny Summer Enrichment Program. Camp Destiny provides a challenging but exciting curriculum that addresses five key focus areas: Academics, Arts and Crafts, Health and Fitness, Life Skills, and Technology. In general, some of the activities, classes, and courses that students are exposed to throughout the summer program are tutoring, computer literacy, development of leadership skills, arts and crafts, and enrichment field trips. Because of the success of the program, it has expanded to include an afterschool component to provide tutoring, remediation, homework assistance, and college preparatory throughout the school year. In June 2013, Camp Destiny Summer Enrichment and Afterschool Program submitted an application to the Mississippi Department of Education to compete for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant which they were subsequently awarded in September 2013. It is now the only such program of its kind in Lauderdale County.

The founding Executive School Board members are as listed below. They represent a diverse group of city officials, businessmen, academicians, and philanthropists within the Meridian community who are steadfastly committed to improving the academic integrity and atmosphere of the greater Meridian area. Members of the founding board will not receive nor will be entitled to compensation or gratuity of any kind from either the charter school or NDUDC.

Name	Current Professional Title	Organization	Board Role	Focus/Enterprise
LaBaron Hedgemon	Executive Director CEO	NDUDC Hedgemon Group	President	Launch Director (Professional Development)
Freddie Monsour	Attorney	Evans & Monsour, PLLC	Member	Legal Counsel
Gloria Williams	Retired	N/A	Member	Retired Educator (Curriculum & Instruction)
LCDR Marlon Austin (Retired)	Personnel Specialist	NAS-Meridian	Member	Retired Navy Officer (Human Resources)

### B. Replication Information

This is the first time any member of New Destiny Charter Academy School Board has been a part of a founding group for a charter school.

### C. Partner Organization

NDUDC will be partnering directly with FRCFC in providing pertinent support services to the establishment and infrastructure of The Academy. Both organizations will provide ongoing support related to fundraising, property acquisition, and leasing/purchasing of facilities once the school launches.

Specifically, NDUDC will provide direct assistance in hiring appropriate management, marketing, and recruitment of the faculty, staff, and administration but will not directly manage New Destiny Charter Academy. Despite the Academy and co-founding corporation being eponymously linked, NDUDC will not provide any direct administration to the Academy. Administration of the Academy will only be provided by qualified administrators with appropriate credentialing as mandated by the Mississippi Department of Education. FRCFC will provide direct assistance in acquisition and management of property and facilities where the academy will be located.

#### D. School Mission, Vision, and Goal

*Mission-* The mission of New Destiny Charter Academy is to create a dynamic learning environment that is relevant, vigorous, and goal-oriented that ensures each student remains actively engaged throughout the process of academic achievement.

*Vision:* The founders of New Destiny Academy envision a school that embraces inclusivity among community, parents, and staff and administration in an academic milieu that fosters partnership in the educational achievement of each student.

*Goal:* It is the impetus of the founding board that once students have graduated from New Destiny Charter Academy they will successfully matriculate into either the Meridian Public School District or Lauderdale County School District. However, the ultimate goal of New Destiny Charter Academy is to provide a rigorous, enriching, but engaging curriculum and academic experience that will provide each student with a sound scholastic foundation that will provide a seamless transition to the next level of their education.

#### E. Overview of the Educational Program

New Destiny Charter Academy will provide a comprehensive educational program that stresses a challenging K-5 core curriculum. The kindergarten curriculum is designed to enhance the young child's physical development, including motor skills, language development, and sensory development, thus, preparing the child for a more structured academic curriculum in the subsequent elementary grades. As a result of the low academic skills and knowledge base that the majority of students will enter the academy with, the elementary curriculum will be centered on course requirements which align with and meet the requirements of state standards in each content area. Because the Academy will also be supported by the Camp Destiny Afterschool Program, students will have an extended class schedule that addresses tutoring, remediation, computer technology training, and other pertinent life and social skills. This arrangement is necessary to provide additional scaffolds that will be required for some learners. In addition, faculty will be provided professional development to gauge how to best to effectively access reading across the content areas and implement a balanced literacy approach in Language Arts classrooms. Every teacher is trained to be a teacher of strategies to access reading and academic vocabulary across each content area.

### III. Enrollment Projections

New Destiny Charter Academy is will be located at 5718 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Freedom Rock Christian Fellowship Church Education Building. To ensure that the building was in compliance with all local and state codes, Freedom Rock invested over \$60,000 towards renovations and upgrades to the building, including the removal of all lead-free paint, installation of a modernized sprinkler system on all floors, and a state of the art security system that directly and immediately accesses the facility to the City of Meridian Fire and Police Department. The Education Building is a three-story 7,092 square foot structure with 8-12

classrooms (depending upon configuration), two state of the art Windows 8 computer labs with over 20 computer stations, two activity rooms, two administrative offices, and a fully functioning commercial kitchen with a dining area for up to 130 people. The general assembly has a capacity of 270 people and has been fully renovated as well with new seating and carpeting along with significant upgrades to lighting, audio, sound, and visual componetry. In compliance with the American Disabilities Act of 1990 the building has handicapped accessible parking, entrances, and restrooms on the main floor. To create and maintain a safe, drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free environment for all students and employees, The Academy will be in full compliance with the *Drug Free Schools and Community Act of 1986* and the *Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988*, and, thus, the uses of such substances are strictly prohibited on the premises.

Table 1 lists the initial enrollment and anticipated growth in enrollment of the Academy through SY2019-2020. Initial enrollment assumes that new enrollees for grades K-3 will represent approximately 3% and grades 4-5 will represent approximately 5% of the Meridian Public School District enrollment based on data from SY2011-2012<sup>1</sup>. Growth in enrollment is based on an aggressive marketing strategy that anticipates an 8% (±2%) annual growth.

Table 1. Enrollment Projections for New Destiny Charter Academy

Year	SY2014-15	SY2015-16	SY2016-17	SY2017-18	SY2018-19	SY2019-20
<b>New Destiny Lower Elementary</b>						
K	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	14	16	17	18	20	22
2	14	16	17	18	20	22
3	13	14	15	16	18	19
4	-----	-----	14	15	16	18
5	-----	-----	14	15	16	18
<b>Projected Annual Enrollment</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>115</b>

We look forward to working with you towards the completion of our petition and the successful start of our school year.

Sincerely,



LaBaron Hedgemon, CEO  
 New Destiny Urban Development Corporation (NDUDC)

<sup>1</sup> Source: Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Reporting