

LETTER OF INTENT

July 30, 2021

Richard T. Porteus, Jr.

Lead Founder / Proposed Executive Director

New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School

Quest Center for Innovation

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign

75 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148-4906

Re: **Letter of Intent to Apply for a Regional Commonwealth Charter**

Dear Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign:

The *New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School* (the "Cheironeum") intends to apply for a regional Commonwealth charter to serve 1,050 students in grades six through twelve. To be located within the Seaport Cultural District of New Bedford, the Cheironeum will draw its students from the urban core of the SouthCoast, consisting of the "Gateway Cities" of New Bedford and Fall River, as well as Dartmouth, the suburban-rural town that connects them, home to the main campus of U. Mass. Dartmouth and significant regional commerce and agriculture.

Mission

Purpose The New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School, prepares SouthCoast youth to thrive in a world of accelerating societal, economic, and environmental change.

Specialized focus Drawing on the maritime heritage, marine environment, and diverse coastal culture of the SouthCoast to support experiential education, deeper learning, and responsible rites of passage, *Value of the School* the Cheironeum empowers a diverse and inclusive community of learners to:

1. Meet, as curious, disciplined, and independent THINKERS, world-class academic standards;
2. Participate, as responsible CITIZENS, in an emerging global society;
3. Conserve, as thoughtful STEWARDS, a complex global ecosystem;
4. Create, as innovative ENTREPRENEURS, options for success in a global economy;
5. Contribute, as effective COLLABORATORS, to the credit, resources, reputation, and welfare of their communities.

Motto

"To find your place, seek a better world."

Students to be Served

To ensure a diverse and inclusive community of learners in grades six through twelve that is *proportionately representative* of the student-age population of New Bedford, Fall River, and Dartmouth, the Cheironeum's recruiting and retention efforts will include significant outreach to those students whose socio-economic classification, limited English proficiency, learning challenges, lack of prior academic achievement, and/or disciplinary record place them at risk of underachieving or dropping out before the successful completion of high school.

Approach to Curriculum and Teaching

As a Commonwealth charter school, the Cheironeum will be a "laboratory of innovation," prototyping, testing, and continuously improving an innovative whole-school model that uses Joseph Campbell's theory of the "Hero's Journey" to develop the "whole child"—in mind, body, heart, and hand—for the purpose of increasing student agency and self-efficacy.

The Cheironeum model supports experiential education, deeper learning, and responsible rites of passage (i.e., celebrating evidence of increasing competence and maturity with commensurate increases in autonomy and responsibility.) While engaging in product-oriented service learning—pairing academic rigor with real-world relevance—students will address seven, basic, universal human needs—safety/health, food, shelter, clothing, transportation, culture, and education—that connect them to the rest of humanity across time and space.

In tackling real-world challenges, students will apprentice in a "junior version of the whole game," assuming the five roles the Cheironeum deems essential to self and society in the 21st century: thinker, citizen, steward, entrepreneur, and collaborator.

To hone core academic disciplines as indispensable "tools of the mind," to ensure and validate high academic standards, and to compound students' social capital in an increasingly global world, the Cheironeum will enroll all students in the International Baccalaureate's Middle Years Programme (grades 6-10) and Diploma Programme (grades 11 and 12.) The IB develops, provides, updates, and administers curricular frameworks, assessments, and professional development long-recognized as world-class for their academic rigor. *The International Baccalaureate organization will function as the Proven Provider/School Support Organization (PP/SSO) for the Cheironeum.*

Key Design Elements

- A **transdisciplinary curriculum** that exceeds MassCore, adheres to the standards of the IB, and supports each learner's mastery of six essential disciplines—literature and composition; language acquisition; geography/history; natural science; mathematics; and studio, performing, and applied arts.

- **Product-oriented service learning** that pairs academic rigor with real-world relevance
- A **professional learning community** that supports the individual growth and school-wide collaboration of teachers
- **A network of partners, collaborators, advisers, and volunteers**—including institutions of higher education, museums, and other relevant nonprofit organizations—that extend the resources and expertise available to stimulate and nurture both students and teachers
- **Multi-year personal portfolios** that document a learner’s developing competencies, both academic and non-academic, as well as his or her growing capacity for self-reflection

Applicant Group

The applicant group of the New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School, includes:

- **Educators** with experience with both public and private education at the middle, high school, and college levels as parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and founder of a successful charter school.
- **Business professionals** with experience in finance, law, and real estate
- **Nonprofit professionals** with expertise in social, economic, and environmental issues
- **Parents** of potential students
- **Community members**

In addition, members of the applicant group have significant ties to the SouthCoast community as natives, long-time residents, representatives of diverse cultures, local business owners, and/or staff, directors, officers, and members of area nonprofits. Finally, all members have a connection, either personally, professionally, or both, to the maritime history, marine environment, and/or coastal culture of the Atlantic World, including but not limited to the SouthCoast.

On behalf of the Cheironeum’s applicant group,

/s/ Richard T. Porteus, Jr.

Richard T. Porteus, Jr.

Lead Founder/Executive Director (proposed)

New Bedford Cheironeum, A Commonwealth Charter School

APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET

This information is included with all submissions. The application, including this form, are posted on the Department website. Applicants are advised that the primary contact person may be contacted by the public and/or media with questions about the proposed school.

Name of Proposed School: **New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School**

School Address (if known): **TBD (within the Historic/Seaport Cultural District of New Bedford)**

School Location (City/Town REQUIRED): **New Bedford, Bristol County**

Primary Contact Person: **Richard T. Porteus, Jr.**

Role or relationship of contact person to proposal: **Lead Founder/Proposed Executive Director**

Street Address [Street, City/Town, State, and Zip Code]:

**New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School
Quest Center for Innovation
1213 Purchase St, Unit 2,
New Bedford MA 02740**

Daytime Tel: **(774) 255-3624**

Secondary Tel: **(508) 542-4138**

Email: **rporteus@newbedfordcheironeum.org**

1. The proposed school will open in the fall of school year: 2022-2023 2023-2024

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	6, 9	300
Second Year	6,7,9,10	600
Third Year	6,7,8,9,10,11	900
Fourth Year	6,7,8,9,10,11,12	1,050
Fifth Year	6,7,8,9,10,11,12	1,050
<i>Add additional rows as needed to show planned growth to reach full proposed grade span and maximum enrollment.</i>		

2. Grade span at full enrollment: **6-12**

3. Total student enrollment when fully expanded: **1,050**

4. Age at entry for kindergarten, if applicable: **Not Applicable**

5. If applicable, the proposed Horace Mann charter school is: **Not Applicable**

New or Conversion

6. If applicable, the proposed type of Horace Mann¹ charter school is: **Not Applicable**

Horace Mann I Horace Mann II Horace Mann III

Questions #7-10 are for applications for a Commonwealth charter school ONLY.

7. Will this proposed Commonwealth school be a **regional charter school**? Yes No

If yes, list the school districts (including regional school districts) in the proposed region. Please only list districts that are included in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* at

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=app>. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

New Bedford

Dartmouth

Fall River

If no, please specify the district's population as reported in the most recent United States census estimate for the community the school intends to serve: **Not Applicable**

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall not approve a new Commonwealth charter school in any community with a population of less than 30,000 as determined by the most recent United States census estimate [available at <http://www.census.gov/>], unless it is a regional charter school. (MGL c. 71 § 89(i)(1).

8. For all proposed Commonwealth charter schools, list the districts that are contiguous with the proposed school's district or region. Please only list districts that are included in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/new/?section=app>. (Use additional sheets if necessary.)

Acushnet

Fairhaven

Somerset

Freetown

Westport

9. Will the proposed Commonwealth charter school serve a district where overall student performance on MCAS is in the lowest 10 percent, as designated in *District Information on Enrollment Projections for New Applications and Expansion Amendments* or in any updated analysis performed by the Department? Yes No

¹ The revision of M.G.L. c. 71, § 89 in 2010 created three types of Horace Mann charter schools, each with a particular set of requirements. For a description of Horace Mann II Charter Schools, see the Questions and Answers document at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>.

10. Will the proposed Commonwealth charter school serve a district or districts in which the 9 percent net school spending cap is, or could be, exceeded by applications during the upcoming cycle? **Yes** No

11. Have members of the applicant group previously submitted a prospectus or final application that did not result in a charter? **Yes** No

If yes, is the present submission related in content to the previous application?

Yes No

If yes, please indicate the name of the previous proposal and the year submitted.

New Bedford Cheironeum, a Commonwealth Charter School 2017-2018

12. Is the applicant group currently the board of trustees of an existing charter school?

Yes **No**

If answered YES, please explain why the group is not using the charter application designed for use by a current board of trustees. **Not Applicable**

13. Do members of the applicant group currently operate or are they employed by a private or parochial school? Yes **No**

14. Are any members of the applicant group present or past members of a charter school board of trustees, school committee, or other type of public governing body? **Yes** No

If yes, please indicate the person's name; the charter school name and school location, or school committee district; and dates of membership.

R. Porteus was the lead founder, lead author of the charter, and founding president (volunteer CEO) of Sturgis Charter School in Hyannis.

Sturgis currently ranks #2 among public schools in the Commonwealth (US News) and provided a prototype for *In Search of Deeper Learning: The Quest to Remake the American High School* (Mehta and Fine 2019).

Porteus created Sturgis as only the second IB school in Massachusetts (there are now twenty-two) and pioneered the idea of "IB for All." He served as lead founder and founding president from 1996-1999.

With respect to "other type of public governing body," R. Porteus, S. Murray, C. Aguilar, and M. Cancilliere are all currently directors/officers of federally funded Community Health Centers in New Bedford, Fall River, and Providence, RI.