

Charter school sought in Troy

Application calls for opening in 2008-09 with 78 fifth-grade students

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TROY -- A new charter school, True North Troy Preparatory Charter School, has filed an application with the state Charter Schools Institute to open for the 2008-09 school year.

The proposed school would enroll 78 fifth-grade students during its first year. By its fifth year of operation it would have an enrollment of 299 students in fifth through eighth grades.

True North Troy Preparatory Charter School is the only charter school application in the Capital Region for the 2008-09 school year pending before either the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York or the New York State Board of Regents.

Troy City School District officials said the district wants to retain its students.

"All agencies have the right to apply for charters. It is the responsibility of local school districts, including Troy, to continually improve the quality of their educational programs so that parents would want to send their children to us and not to the charter schools," Superintendent Fadhilika Atiba-Weza said Wednesday.

"I am confident that Troy is on the way to becoming the kind of school district that would make charters unattractive," Atiba-Weza added.

The Charter Schools Institute is in the second week of its interviews and review of the applicants, said Cynthia Proctor, institute spokeswoman.

The True North Troy Preparatory Charter School would be the second charter school to open in Troy if the SUNY Board of Trustees approves its application. This could occur as early as September after the application reviews are completed.

The Ark Community Charter School is the only other charter school operating in Troy. It enrolls 179 students in kindergarten through sixth grades. The school is located at 762 River St.

Doug Lemov, a former vice president for accountability at the Charter Schools Institute, is the lead applicant for the Troy charter. Uncommon Schools Inc. is the charter management organization for the school.

Uncommon Schools on its Web site at <http://www.uncommonschools.org> said that the True North Public Schools network will build a network of ten schools in upstate urban communities. The first school in this system is the True North Rochester Preparatory Charter School for fifth- and sixth-graders.

"Though it will initially concentrate on middle schools, True North will ideally grow to 10 schools (five elementary and five middle schools) by September 2010 and will ultimately serve as many as 3,200 students," the Web site states.

Lemov heads up this program. Lemov could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

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