

December 2, 2015

The Minnesota Guild
Attn: Brad Blue
67 8th Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413-1845

RE: Notice of Intent to form a Charter School in Marine on St. Croix

Dear Mr. Blue,

It is a pleasure to submit this Letter of Intent for The Minnesota Guild to serve as a potential Authorizer for the future Marine Mills Charter School. The start of this path is exciting, and although it will be long, we feel it is the best opportunity to deliver the level of quality education desired by our community.

The information provided in this Letter of Intent is our current thinking, which is expected to evolve and become refined with additional community dialogue and teacher input. The town of Marine on St. Croix is a small and tightly-knit community that collaborates with the current Marine Elementary school (Stillwater District) in a number of ways. We are proud of our school community and want to see it once again provide high quality education to our kids and opportunities for staff to enrich programming utilizing the assets of the community.

1. Name of proposed school: Marine Mills Charter School

2. Primary contact person: Kristina Smitten

Mailing address: 2333 Jackson Circle
Street and/or PO Box
Marine on St. Croix MN 55047
City State Zip Code

Phone: (day) 651-246-9443 (evening) 651-246-9443

E-mail address: ksmitten@smittengroup.com

3. Brief description of proposed school program:

Marine Mills Charter School will improve all pupil learning and all student achievement as described through the below beliefs, goals, educational philosophy and instructional approach statements.

We believe that children learn best in a school setting that balances their educational, physical, emotional and social needs. The proposed mission of Marine Mills Charter School is to blend leadership opportunities with the community, environment, and the arts in a learning environment that is centered around students, designed by teachers, and supported by home and community. Marine Mills Charter School is where academics will lead to a stronger, healthier community.

The students at Marine Mills Charter School will be educated through a collaborative effort among faculty, staff, parents, and the community. Marine Mills Charter School is uniquely located near state and national parks, and is an integral part of the community, which creates a myriad of outdoor and

community learning opportunities. Our small school size, traditional classroom structure, and classroom collaborations encourage a supportive environment for all of our students. Marine Mills Charter School will be teacher-powered, with staff responsible for the learning program and encouraged to use unique and innovative teaching techniques. The students of Marine Mills Charter School will graduate with a strong foundation for lifelong learning and responsible leadership.

GOALS

- To improve student learning and achievement.
- To increase learning opportunities for all students.
- To help every student become a life-long learner.
- To empower students to be leaders.
- To encourage parents and guardians to be active in their child's education.
- To inspire the involvement of students in their larger community.
- To prepare our students academically, socially, emotionally and physically for success in middle school and beyond.
- To foster an understanding of, and excitement for environmental stewardship.
- To enable students to express their feelings, communicate thoughts, explore their creativity, solve problems, and communicate ideas through the arts.
- To empower children to become active participants in their food choices, and teach students how their choices about food affect their health, the environment and their community.
- To use a teacher-powered model of school leadership, which will provide professional opportunities for teachers, and allow teachers to connect with individual students and shape personalized learning trajectories.
- To implement a curriculum allowing for a smooth transition to Stillwater District #834 future Middle School and High School.
- To evaluate our successes through students, teachers and community members.

Educational Philosophy and Instructional Approach

- We believe that all students have the right to a quality education appropriate to their individual learning styles.
- We believe that all students learn in different ways, and that they should be taught using the method best suited to their individual learning style.
- We believe that children learn best in a school setting that balances their educational, physical, emotional and social needs.
- We believe that education is a cooperative effort between the students, school staff, parents, and the community.
- We believe that change is constant, and that the school community must be prepared to creatively lead and adapt to change.
- We believe that in the school environment, our teachers understand their students' needs best. We believe that giving teachers the collective authority and accountability to make decisions influencing curriculum and school success motivates teachers to adapt and innovate according to students' needs.
- We believe that consistent and balanced evaluation will lead to higher student achievement, innovation in teacher delivery of the educational program, and thoughtful school leadership decision-making.
- We believe that the local, outdoor environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Educating in the outdoor classroom has a positive impact on student and teacher health, and increases environmental literacy among students.

- We believe that by providing children with the necessary tools, they will embrace leadership opportunities within themselves and their community and become engaged global citizens.

4. Grade levels to be served and target students.

The Marine Mills Charter School will be a K-6 primary school, serving 176 students at capacity. Currently, Marine Elementary has an enrollment of 155 students with 43% of the students open enrolled. We anticipate students attending from Marine on St. Croix, Scandia, May Township, Stillwater, Stillwater Township and Forest Lake. A parent survey, currently open, has 91% of parents showing intent to send their students to Marine Mills Charter School. Our first community meeting with parents will occur this Saturday, December 5th.

The current educational programming at Marine Elementary is not meeting students academic needs at the level desired by the community. The programming is limited and not site specific. The District has suggested significant programming changes to be implemented in the Fall of 2017. The community has determined that these programming changes will likely not address the needs of our students and staff, and that Fall of 2017 is the best time to transition to a charter school format.

5. What is the proposed location of the school and why is this the proposed location?

Marine on St. Croix

The community desires to keep an elementary school within the town of Marine on St. Croix, and the existing school facility is expected to be available to lease. If for some reason this facility is not available, another option within the town is available.

6. Does the school expect to contract with a charter management organization or company for school management or operation? Yes No

7. Names, roles, and current employment of persons on the founding team:

Jonathon Dettmann - Parent, Attorney

Jon has a fifth grader and seventh grader. Professionally, he is a Partner at Faegre Baker Daniels LLP, specializing in government contracting, climate change and environment, and business litigation. Jon serves on the board of Climate Generation.

Glen Mills - Community Leader

Glen Mills is in his 14th year as Mayor of Marine on St. Croix. He grew up in Marine and attended Marine Elementary, as did his children. Mayor Mills recognizes the school as integral to the community. Professionally he works for the State of Minnesota.

Kristina Smitten - Community Leader, Parent

A community member and parent of a third, fifth and seventh grader. She is a Planning Commissioner and serves on advisory committees such as the Village Center Task Force and Watershed Committee. Professionally, she works in commercial development.

Lisa White - Community Leader, Parent

Lisa has been a member of Marine on St. Croix for 20 years. She has a sixth grader at Marine Elementary. She has served on the Marine School Association for 4 years in the capacities of Treasurer and Fundraising Co-Chair. Lisa and her husband own Bob White Studio, LLC.

Lisa Dochniak - Parent Alumni, Licensed Teacher

Lisa is a teacher with St. Paul Public Schools for over 25 years teaching fifth grade and now Kindergarten. Her family lives in Marine on St. Croix and her children attended Marine Elementary. Lisa sees the potential of a future Marine Mills Charter School.

Advisory Group

Advisory Group members are selected based on a range of expertise in community engagement, organizational development, teaching and curriculum development, financial, and legal counsel. This group includes six licensed educators, District leadership and staff, community leaders, specialists in finance and law, and Marine School Association representatives.

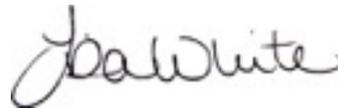
In full transparency, we have submitted letters of intent to both Audubon Center of the Northwoods and Novation Education Opportunities. Our goal is to find mutual agreement with an Authorizer that Marine Mills Charter School is a good fit with their organization and with our school.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our proposal. We are happy to meet in person or further elaborate in writing our intent and goals for the future Marine Mills Charter School.

Appreciatively,



Kristina Smitten



Lisa White