

Letter of Intent Form
New Operator Request

A “new operator” is defined as an applicant group that has not previously operated a charter school and does not intend to contract with an Education Service Provider (ESP). New Operators in the state of Indiana may apply to Education One, LLC. The Letter of Intent Form must be submitted, prior to submitting an initial proposal to Education One. Please send all completed documentation via email to:

Lindsay Omlor
Lindsay@education1.org
Managing Director, Education One, LLC.

Note: Submission of the Letter of Intent (LOI) does not obligate a school to submit an initial proposal to Education One. However, schools should be advised that the LOI is subject to Indiana’s Public Access Laws, including public records requests.

Name of Proposed Charter School
Akoban Academy of Indianapolis

Proposed Charter School Location			
Street Address: TBD			
City: Indianapolis (Marion County)	State: Indiana	Zip Code: TBD	School District: TBD

Legal Name of Group Applying for Charter/Contact Information	
Group Name: Beyond the Gap, Inc.	Point of Contact Name: Tamiko Jordan
Point of Contact Email: tamiko.jordan@beyondthegap.org	Point of Contact Cell Phone: (262) 389-5859

Year of Opening (Fall 2016 or later): Summer 2020
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Planned Year of Opening

Proposed School Information		
Proposed Grade Levels Served: K3-8	Proposed Enrollment: 490	Proposed Model (STEM, Online, etc.): STEAM

Brief Description of Proposed School:



Akoban Academy of Indianapolis

The “Akoben,” an Adinkra symbol of West Africa, is a war horn blown to signal a collective call to action and we are answering that call. The Akoben Academy of Indianapolis which is projected to open in July 2020 was established by a collaborative group of active and rewired (retired) teachers, principals, professors, concerned parents and community members. Our goal is to bring effective solutions to the current educational crisis that has persisted in the urban community far too long.

Mission and vision for the proposed school

- The **mission** of the Akoben Academy of Indianapolis is to prepare our students in a safe, positive and healthy environment that challenges them academically, nurtures their social and emotional skills and is culturally appropriate, so they are prepared to flourish and succeed in this 21st century global economy.
- Our **vision** is to effectively prepare our students academically, spiritually and emotionally to thrive, by providing a host of educationally enriching experiences. Our students will learn to think critically, develop solutions, value themselves, believe in their abilities and care for others. They will realize their inner genius and work towards a potential they once believed unattainable. Hope is powerful, especially when combined with teaching and facilitation that is guided by love and high expectations from the adults with whom the students have placed their trust.

Academic focus and plan: Our overall goal for the students is holistic, focusing on academic and social-emotional development within a cultural context that is appropriate, informative and encouraging.

- **Academic Focus:** We will employ a challenging curriculum emphasizing mastery, through active and engaging instruction, project-based activities and collaborative planning. The curriculum will include:
 - ELA...literacy is the key to all other courses. Not only is comprehension important, the subject matter is also critical.
 - ELL (if needed) instruction
 - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
 - Home Economics (i.e. financial literacy, self-care, healthy eating, food preparation, etc.)
 - Second Language Learning (includes culture and history)
 - Gender-specific classrooms for grades 4-8 for certain courses (i.e. ELA, Science and Mathematics)
 - Ability-grouping/multi-age classrooms
 - Peer tutoring and mentoring
 - High Ability programming
- **Teacher Support and Development:** Talent will be cultivated from within the school. Teachers and staff will participate in weekly professional development, resulting in more than 250 hours of PD per school year. We will ensure teachers have the proper tools, resources,

space and support they need to excel in the classroom. Experienced educators will mentor every teacher and will remain connected for no less than 3 years. They will help create attainable goals, provide valuable feedback, modeling and practice. With their mentors, teachers will participate in planning meetings that are outcome-oriented which will drive their lessons and offer thoughtful collaboration with their colleagues.

- **Teacher Leadership & Advancement:** Teachers drive student outcomes and their success should be realized in their earning power, access to increased responsibilities and opportunities for leadership. We are developing a formal teacher leadership development program that will allow teachers to have a positive impact on student achievement inside and outside of the classroom. At various grade level groupings, teachers will be appointed teacher leaders (K3-K5, 1st-3rd, 4th-6th and 7th-8th grades) helping to support teachers with curriculum planning, classroom management, cultural context and SEL teaching as well as developing extra-curricular experiences and activities. Recognizing the aspirations for school leadership, our leadership development activities will include a track for those who desire to work on a path to school leadership. These teachers will work closely with school leadership, offering an opportunity to engage in administrative duties and projects fist-hand.
- **Cultural Context and Professional Learning Communities** are key components of the success of the students and the school. We believe that candid conversations and about race, culture and identity will positively affect learning and the school community. The diverse cultural backgrounds of the students and their families will be a source of strength and opportunity. All staff will participate in small peer led PLC groups. The goal of these groups is to strengthen and positively influence the relationships with the students.
- **Parental and Community Involvement** will be highly encouraged and supported. The following elements will be included in our plan:
 - Individual Educational Family Plans
 - Personal and Professional Development for parents/guardians
 - School-based parent leadership groups
 - High Ability Broad Based Planning Committee
 - PTO involvement
 - PAT (Parent Action Team)
 - Uses the organizing strategies of relationship building, research and public action to address internal (school) and external (community) parental concerns
 - Speaks out and advocates around city and state-wide education policy issues
 - Akoben Academy Parent Advisory Council
 - Oversees the academic growth of the students
 - Monitors the progress of the school
 - School volunteer opportunities and fundraising
 - Our school will always be open for parent visits and for community education. The community will be invited to volunteer and participate in the various school events throughout the school year.

- **Other Key Components**

- Yearly travel experiences locally, nationally and internationally
- A true year-round calendar which includes extended weekdays (7:30 AM-5:30 PM), Saturday School, structured extra-curricular activities and educational experiences during school breaks and weekends.

The targeted population of students: Our focus will be on low-income students and those who have been historically marginalized, such as low-income, African American and/or Latino students, or underrepresented (i.e. High Ability programming). Please know, however, that the Akoben Academy does not and will not discriminate with respect to gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other barriers to participation.

The need for the proposed school: There is such a great need for quality, culturally relevant schools in the urban communities across the country and specifically in Marion County of Indiana.

- The cultural and linguistic diversity of African American and Latino students as well as English Language Learners has caused a deficit in the identification of these groups for High Ability programming. David Card of UC-Berkley and Laura Giuliano of the University of Miami conducted a study that clearly demonstrated a faulty identification system. Only 28% of gifted students in third grade were black or Hispanic, compared to 60% of all students in the studied school districts.
- There has been a dramatic population shift in Marion County from Center Township to the Lawrence Township. Due to the increasing growth of the African American and Latino student population, there is a need for culturally and linguistically relevant schools in our proposed area, the Eastside of Marion County.
- Charter schools have historically been criticized for the lack of high-quality teachers, teachers who do not hold a State license (aside from a charter school license), who have little experience and/or lacking resources. The Akoben Academy of Indianapolis has been proactive in assuring the needed resources-including human resources- are available and affordable. We will be a national model for existing and future charter schools.
- The staff and the curriculum will be representative of the student body.
- Our focus is on the overall educational process. Students will begin their regular school studies at the age of 3 (3-year old Kindergarten) and matriculate through Grade 8. By engaging students at an earlier age, we anticipate better outcomes. This early student engagement will also allow us to influence parental involvement.

Community outreach completed or planned:

- Our plan includes a close connection to the community. We will have regularly scheduled monthly Town Hall meetings as well as open board meetings to which the community will be invited.
- We have also begun to develop partnerships with various organizations to enhance our programming. Some of the organizations include:
 - The Virtuoso Group (retired/rewired educators) ...teacher mentors
 - AARP (volunteers and/or experienced workers)
 - Peace Learning Center (restorative practices)
 - MEPI (Minority Engineering Program of Indianapolis) ...robotics, engineering, coding,

- etc.
- STEMnasium
- The Pan-Hellenic Council (the Divine Nine fraternities and sororities)
- Beyond the Gap...youth development and life planning for students
- Ivy Tech (Early Childhood Center interns)
- Marion University, IUPUI and Ball State (student interns/student teaching)
- Community Health Network
- Minority Health Coalition
- Ecumenical Council
- Garry Holland (The Historic Journey...culturally relevant teaching)
- Augusta Mann (Culturally Relevant Literacy Teacher Training)
- The Quality of Life Group for the area in which the school will be located
- We understand the importance of community involvement and will continue to develop our portfolio of community partners throughout this year of planning and the duration of the existence of the school.