



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

*Proposal to Authorize
Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC
to Operate the Proposed
Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14*

September 25, 2014

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Executive Summary

The board of trustees of Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC (the “Education Corporation”), a not-for-profit charter school education corporation currently authorized by SUNY to operate 24 charter schools, seeks the authority to operate 14 additional charter schools with four opening in August 2015 and 10 opening in August 2016 as follows:

- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 1 in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 2 (Manhattan);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 2 in CSD 3 (Manhattan);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 3 in CSD 9 (Bronx);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 4 in CSD 27 (Queens).
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 5 in CSD 13 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 6 in CSD 14 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 7 in CSD 15 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 8 in CSD 17 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 9 in CSD 18 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 10 in CSD 22 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 11 in CSD 23 (Brooklyn);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 12 in CSD 24 (Queens);
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 13 in CSD 28 (Queens); and,
- Success Academy Charter School – NYC 14 in CSD 30 (Queens).

Each school would open with 190 students in Kindergarten and 1st grade and would add one grade each year thereafter through the initial charter period. Each of the schools would reach their enrollment capacity of 675 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade in the final year of the proposed charter periods and envision ultimately expanding through the 12th grade in subsequent charter periods, if granted. Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 – 14 would replicate the successful model of all 24 of the Education Corporation’s schools. The Education Corporation would continue to contract with Success Academy Charter Schools, Inc. (the “Network”), a Delaware non-profit organization based in New York, which manages all Success Academy Charter Schools. Network managed schools have consistently performed well above their CSDs and New York City as a whole.

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) finds the proposals for Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 – 14 rigorously demonstrate the criteria detailed in the Institute’s January 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) and are consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”).

Based on the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) approve the charter proposals to authorize Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC to operate Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 – 14 within the one, existing education corporation, Success Academy Charter Schools - NYC.

Background and Description

The Education Corporation submitted proposals to allow it to operate Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 – 14 (“Success Academies NYC 1 – 14”) to the Institute on July 7, 2014, in response to the RFP the Institute released on behalf of the SUNY Trustees on January 6, 2014.¹ While SUNY may still award a small number of charters pursuant to its original application process, amendments to the Act made additional charters to create new education corporations available only through an RFP process. At the time of the summer cycle there were 70 charters available for charter schools outside of New York City and 12 charters available for charter schools located inside New York City per Education Law § 2852(9). The Institute received 17 proposals for charter schools to be located in New York City in response to the Summer Cycle of the 2014 RFP.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposals under consideration including academic, fiscal and legal soundness reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged two independent consultants to evaluate the organizational soundness of the Network and the Education Corporation. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute, as well as Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the Board of Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, conducted interviews with members of the Education Corporation’s board of trustees and representatives of AF.

Mission and Key Design Elements

The mission of the proposed schools, like other Network schools, would be to “provide children in New York City with an exceptionally high quality education that gives them the knowledge, skills, character, and disposition to meet and exceed New York State standards and the resources to lead and succeed in school, college, and a competitive global economy.” The schools’ key design elements are as follows:

- relentless focus on student achievement;
- research-based and results driven curriculum;
- the effective use of student performance data to improve student learning;
- more instructional time with a longer school day;
- school leaders with the power to lead;
- highly qualified, highly trained staff;
- strong school culture including consistent reinforcement of ACTION values (agency, curiosity, try and try, integrity, others, no shortcuts);
- settings and services to meet the needs of special education students; and,
- an academic program that prepares students for success in middle and high school.

Calendar and Schedule

¹ Amendments to the Charter Schools Act in 2010 permit an education corporation to operate more than one school.

The schools would offer 180 days of instruction and feature an extended school day. The school day would run from 7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. for Kindergarten students and until 4:30 p.m. for 1st – 5th grade students, except for Wednesdays when students would be dismissed between 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to allow for staff professional development. Kindergarten students would receive approximately 700 minutes of English language arts (“ELA”), 400 minutes of mathematics, 250 minutes of science and 100 minutes of social studies per week. Students in 1st – 5th grade would receive approximately 900 minutes of ELA, 400 minutes of mathematics, 250 minutes of science, and 100 minutes of social studies per week.

Academic Program

Success Academies – NYC 1 – 14 would follow the program currently in place at all other Network schools. The extended school day allows the model to offer a variety of subjects including the Network developed THINK Literacy, TERC Investigations mathematics, discovery-based Science program, project-based social studies and geography programs, fine arts, chess, sports, and a variety of other programs including music, yoga, ballroom dancing, and theater. Every eight weeks the schools would formally assess students using the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments. Teachers would immediately review the results and use them to create action plans for all students. In addition to its academic curriculum, the schools would teach a set of core values to their students including Agency, Curiosity, Try and Try, Integrity, Others, and No Shortcuts (ACTION) to ensure that graduates are not only intellectual individuals, but also good citizens.

Using a Response to Intervention system, the schools would assess students’ learning needs and provide them with Tier I (in-class differentiation), Tier II (pullout and push-ins with a special education teacher), or Tier III (special education services in accordance with federal law and the district Committee on Special Education) instruction. The schools would set strategies and student specific goals every eight weeks based on the aforementioned assessment cycle.

Each year, teachers would receive approximately 400 hours of quality professional development, beginning with an intensive four week program before school starts, which would continue once a week throughout the school year for three hours and include eight professional development days. In addition, teachers would be given opportunities to observe excellent teachers at other schools (both inside and outside of the Network), and attend workshops designed to master effective teaching techniques. The schools would also send teachers and school leaders to outside conferences, such as the Teachers’ College Conferences, the National Council of Math Conference, the National Science Teacher Association Conference, the DMI Math Conference, and the Understanding by Design Conference.

Organizational Capacity

Each school would have a principal focused solely on teaching and learning and a business manager focused on the operational and financial aspects of the school. An education coordinator would assist the principal in special education and test administration, while a business operations manager would focus on facilities and supply management. A community relations coordinator would focus on parent involvement and communication. Every year, each school would host a school leadership resident responsible for supplementing instructional leadership. In subsequent years, each school leadership team would expand to include a dean of students and office coordinator.

The Education Corporation would continue to contract with the Network, which would provide a wide range of educational and administrative services to the additional schools including school start-up, financial, recruitment, and public relations services; curriculum development and monitoring; school leadership training; professional development; enrollment management; information technology; comprehensive school evaluation; and, external affairs. The Network would receive a flat-rate, per student fee for each student enrolled in the schools. The Institute reviewed the draft management agreement, which holds the fee at 15% of per pupil expenditure. The Institute will review the final, contract pursuant to the charter agreement on behalf of the SUNY Trustees prior to the contract’s approval.

The table below illustrates the operational stage of each of the 24 Network managed schools.

School Name	Authorizer	Location	Year Opened	Grades Served 2014-15
Success Academy Charter School – Harlem 1	SUNY	CSD 3	2007-08	K – 9
Success Academy Charter School – Harlem 2	SUNY	CSD 5	2008-09	K – 7
Success Academy Charter School – Harlem 3	SUNY	CSD 4	2008-09	K – 7
Success Academy Charter School – Harlem 4	SUNY	CSD 3	2008-09	K – 7
Success Academy Charter School – Harlem 5	SUNY	CSD 5	2010-11	K – 5
Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 1	SUNY	CSD 7	2010-11	K – 5
Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 2	SUNY	CSD 8	2010-11	K – 5
Success Academy Charter School – Upper West	SUNY	CSD 2	2011-12	K – 4
Success Academy Charter School – Bed-Stuy 1	SUNY	CSD 14	2011-12	K – 4
Success Academy Charter School – Bed-Stuy 2	SUNY	CSD 14	2012-13	K – 3
Success Academy Charter School – Cobble Hill	SUNY	CSD 15	2012-13	K – 3
Success Academy Charter School – Williamsburg	SUNY	CSD 14	2012-13	K – 3
Success Academy Charter School – Hell’s Kitchen	SUNY	CSD 2	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Crown Heights	SUNY	CSD 17	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Fort Greene	SUNY	CSD 13	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Union Square	SUNY	CSD 2	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Prospect Heights	SUNY	CSD 17	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 3	SUNY	CSD 8	2013-14	K – 2
Success Academy Charter School – Bergen Beach	SUNY	CSD 22	2014-15	K – 1
Success Academy Charter School – Bensonhurst	SUNY	CSD 21	2014-15	K – 1
Success Academy Charter School – Bronx 4	SUNY	CSD 8	2014-15	K – 1
Success Academy Charter School – Rosedale	SUNY	CSD 29	2014-15	K – 1
Success Academy Charter School – Springfield Gardens	SUNY	CSD 29	2014-15	K – 1
Success Academy Charter School – Washington Heights	SUNY	CSD 6	2014-15	K – 1

School Performance

Network schools are among the highest performing in the state and significantly out perform their CSDs of location on the state's ELA and Mathematics examinations. Additionally, all Network schools with testing data are performing significantly better than schools from throughout the state with comparable percentages of students who are economically disadvantaged. See Appendix A for historical assessment data for each Network school where available. Additionally, see Appendix B for information about each proposed CSD.

Governance

The by-laws of the Education Corporation indicate that the board will consist of no fewer than five and no more than 25 trustees. The 14 members that serve on the board of trustees are set forth below.

- 1. Samuel A. Cole, Chair**, is co-founder and president/COO of Phigital, Inc., an early stage technology company that specializes in mobile content. Previously, Mr. Cole served as executive vice president and deputy head of eExchange for State Street eExchange. From 2004 through 2010, Mr. Cole was the president of BlueMountain Solutions, Inc., a risk and analytics service provider and wholly owned subsidiary of BlueMountain Capital Management LLC. Mr. Cole chairs the board of trustees for the Council on Emerging Security Affairs (CENSA). Mr. Cole received his M.B.A. from the MIT Sloan School of Management, an M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy and an A.B. with Honors in Government from Harvard University.
- 2. Bryan Binder, Vice Chair**, is chief executive officer of CastleLine Holdings. Prior to CastleLine, Mr. Binder was a partner and portfolio manager at Caxton Associates, LLC, a \$13 billion global macro hedge fund based in New York, NY and a portfolio manager at S.A.C. Capital, LLC, a \$14 billion hedge fund based in Stamford, CT. Mr. Binder received his J.D./M.B.A. from NYU School of Law/NYU Stern School of Business, and his B.S. in International Economics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- 3. Scott Friedman, Treasurer**, is a co-founding partner at Soroban Capital Partners, a multi-billion dollar global investment firm, and is head of trading and risk management. Before Soroban Capital Partners launched, Mr. Friedman was the head trader at TPG-Axon Capital. He joined TPG-Axon in 2006, and traded across asset classes and all parts of the capital structure globally including equities, fixed income, commodities, foreign exchange, derivatives, swaps and environmental credits. He graduated with honors from the University of Florida with a B.S. in both International Economics and Finance. Mr. Friedman is a Chartered Financial Analyst charter holder, a Financial Risk Manager charter holder, a New York Society of Security Analysts member, and a Global Association of Risk Professionals member.
- 4. Greg Sawers, Secretary**, is the CEO of Assura Group of New York. He previously served as CEO and co-founder of Evercore Asset Management from 2005 to 2011. He has an M.B.A. from Harvard University and a B.S. in foreign language from Georgetown University.
- 5. Rich Barrera** is the founder and portfolio manager of Roystone Capital, a New York based hedge fund. Prior to founding Roystone in 2012, he was a partner and co-portfolio manager at Redwood Capital from 2009-2012 and Glenview Capital from 2002-2009. Mr. Barrera graduated

summa cum laude with a B.S.E. in finance and accounting from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and received an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

6. **Derrell Bradford** is the executive director of Better Education for Kids (B4K), a 501(c)(4) tax-exempt organization supporting common-sense bi-partisan education reforms in New Jersey. Mr. Bradford is also a trustee of We Can Do Better NJ, which supports school choice and a wide range of systemic reforms to improve education for all students. Before joining B4K, he served as the executive director and director of communications for New Jersey's Excellent Education for Everyone where he led and co-led its research and legal efforts, respectively. Additionally, he served on Gov. Chris Christie's Educator Effectiveness Task Force, which gave recommendations on designing a new, statewide evaluation system for teachers and leaders. In 2011, Mr. Bradford was named to NBC's "The Griot 100: History Makers in the Making," and also received the Tri-County Scholarship Fund's "Making a Difference Award." In 2012, he was named an "Ed Reform Champion Under 40" by the Black Alliance for Educational Options. Mr. Bradford sits on the boards of Immaculate Conception (Montclair) and St. Anthony (Jersey City) Catholic high schools. Mr. Bradford appears frequently in print, radio, and on television to discuss and debate a wide range of education reform issues. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a B.A. in English and creative writing.
7. **Sandeep Chainani** is a managing director at Morgan Stanley Asset Management. He is a portfolio manager for the Growth Team, which manages approximately \$20 billion in assets. Mr. Chainani joined Morgan Stanley in 1996. He received a B.S. in Management with a concentration in Finance from SUNY's Binghamton University. He also holds the Chartered Financial Analyst designation.
8. **Suleman Lunat** was a senior principal and portfolio manager in the Capital Markets division of Apollo Global Management where he focused on managing a portfolio of special situation credit and equity investments in both the public and private markets. Prior to joining Apollo, he was a senior investment analyst responsible for generating, evaluating, executing and managing investments in a portfolio of distressed and special situation assets at both Longacre Fund Management and Sandell Asset Management. He graduated from Wesleyan University with a B.S. in Economics.
9. **David Nanus** is a senior managing director in the private equity investment group at LS Power, a power industry focused development and investment company. Prior to joining LS Power in 2005, Mr. Nanus held positions in investment banking with Lazard and Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein, and in accounting with Arthur Andersen. Mr. Nanus received a B.S. in Applied Economics and Management from Cornell University and an MBA with honors from Columbia Business School, and is a Certified Public Accountant.
10. **Graham Officer** is a managing director at Goldman Sachs, & Co. responsible for both the Institutional and International Equity Derivative Sales teams. He joined Goldman Sachs in 1995 as a financial analyst in the Fixed Income Division in New York. After completing the associate program in 1998, he was an international sales trader in Chicago and London in the Equities Division. Mr. Officer earned a B.A. from Bucknell University in 1995.

11. **Khandijah Pickel, Parent Representative**, is the mother of two Success Academy Charter School - Harlem 5 scholars. Ms. Pickel also serves on the school’s parent council.
12. **Jarrett Posner** is currently a partner and the COO at Argonaut Capital, which is a New York, NY - based Global macro hedge fund. Prior to Argonaut, Mr. Posner worked at Triarc Companies, Inc., a NYSE listed company, from 1993-2003. Mr. Posner is also the chairman and a large investor in BMC Investments, a Denver based real estate investment company that owns and manages apartments, retail space and other real estate. Mr. Posner holds a B.A. in Economics from Brown University.
13. **Lance Rosen** is an expert in identifying and investing in valuable businesses with specific experience in risk management. Over the course of a ten-year career at Perry Capital, an \$11 billion hedge fund and one of the industry’s largest and most successful firms, Mr. Rosen built and managed a number of different businesses. He was formerly assistant vice president in the risk management group at Salomon Smith Barney. Mr. Rosen earned an M.A. and a M. Phil. in political science from Columbia University in 1994 and 1995.
14. **Catherine Shinker** is an independent consultant focusing on education reform. She was previously a principal at Bain and Company in the New York office. Ms. Shinker joined Bain in 2006, and focused primarily on financial services. She has also been a member of the Private Equity Group where she has worked on several of the office’s pro bono education efforts. Ms. Shinker holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and a B.S. in Finance and Accounting from Indiana University. She is a Certified Public Accountant.

Facilities

The Education Corporation has indicated that they will work with the NYCDOE to explore the option of using space in underutilized public schools in each of the 14 proposed CSDs.²

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of each school that would open in 2015, Success Academies – NYC 1 - 4, on the district of residence, the New York City School District, is summarized below.

Success Academy Charter Schools - NYC 1 – 4 (per school)

Year	Expected Number of Students (A)	Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid (B)	Projected Charter Per Pupil Revenue (C = A x B)	Public Space Facility Aid (D)*	Total Project Funding From District to Charter School (E = C + D)	New York City School District Budget (F)	Projected Impact to District (G = E / F)
2015-16	190	\$14,127	\$2,684,130	\$536,826	\$3,220,956	\$20,600,000,000	0.0156%
2019-20	675	\$14,627	\$9,873,225	\$1,974,645	\$11,847,870	\$20,600,000,000	0.0575%

* Reflects 20% additional funding over standard per pupil funding if the schools are unable to locate in a public facility.

The fiscal impact of each proposed school that would open in 2016, Success Academies 5 – 14, on the

² Please note that per a change in law, all charter schools in New York City that first commence instruction from the start of the 2014-15 school year may request co-location. NYCDOE must offer a co-location site in a public school building or privately/publically owned facility at NYCDOE expense within the later of 30 days of SUNY’s approval or five months of the school’s written request.

New York City School District is summarized below.

Success Academy Charter School - NYC 5 -14 (per school)

Year	Expected Number of Students (A)	Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid (B)	Projected Charter Per Pupil Revenue (C = A x B)	Public Space Facility Aid (D)*	Total Project Funding From District to Charter School (E = C + D)	New York City School District Budget (F)	Projected Impact to District (G = E / F)
2016-17	190	\$14,627	\$2,779,130	\$555,826	\$3,334,956	\$20,600,000,000	0.0162%
2020-21	675	\$14,627	\$9,873,225	\$1,974,645	\$11,847,870	\$20,600,000,000	0.0575%

* Reflects 20% additional funding over standard per pupil funding if the schools are unable to locate in a public facility.

The calculations above assume that the basic per pupil aid will be \$14,127 for the 2015-16 school year increasing to \$14,627 for the 2016-17 school year, after which it will remain stable during the remainder of the proposed schools’ charters. While it is likely that the New York City School District’s budget will grow over time, the Institute is being conservative by leaving it unchanged after 2016-17. Since all of the proposed schools would seek to locate in public space, the estimates reflect the 20% addition to per pupil funding that the schools would receive if suitable public space were not available. Based on these assumptions, and projections that the charter schools would have full enrollment, Success Academies 1 – 14 would have minimal fiscal impact on public schools in the New York City School District.

The Institute reviewed the charter schools’ proposed start-up and fiscal plans for each year of the proposed charter terms and supporting evidence as well as the Education Corporation’s budgets for the other schools it operates. The Institute also reviewed the Network’s Business Plan and fiscal information to determine its capacity to support additional schools. The Institute finds these budgets and fiscal plans to be sound and sufficient start-up funds will be available to the new charter schools. The Education Corporation’s financial profile as reported in the SUNY Fiscal Dashboard is available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/progress/fiscal-dashboard/>.

Notification and Public Comments

The Institute notified the school district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic areas of the proposed schools about the receipt of the proposals, and the proposals were posted on the Institute’s website for public review. The NYCDOE has held public hearings pertaining to the proposals as follows:

- Success Academies – NYC 1 – 2: September 29, 2014;
- Success Academy – NYC 3: September, 24, 2014;
- Success Academy – NYC 4: September, 17, 2014;
- Success Academies – NYC 5 – 7: September 22, 2014;
- Success Academies – NYC 8 – 11: September 15, 2014; and,
- Success Academies – NYC 12 – 14: September 23, 2014.

The Institute has yet to receive public comments made during these hearings. Additionally, the Institute anticipates receiving comments from the Chancellor of the NYCDOE about each of the proposed schools. The Institute will consider comments made at the public hearings, as well as any comments from the Chancellor of the NYCDOE, and will provide a summary of these comments at the October 8, 2014 Charter Schools Committee meeting. Public comments submitted directly to the Institute as of

September 22, 2014 are compiled in a Summary of Public Comments found in Appendix C. All public comments were carefully reviewed and considered as part of the review process.

Preference Scoring

The RFP contained preference criteria to reflect the requirements of Education Law § 2852(9-a).

During the summer cycle of the 2014 SUNY RFP, the Institute received applications for 17 charter schools. At this time, the Institute is recommending all 17 proposals as the Institute has found that each of the proposals will result in an academically, fiscally and legally sound charter school. Per the RFP, the Institute will score and rank each proposal prior to any consideration by the SUNY Trustees. However, at the time of drafting of this report, the New York City School District (the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”)) had not yet submitted its comments on the proposals. As those comments may influence scoring and the Institute’s recommendation, and as the SUNY Trustees must consider those comments per New York Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute will provide the SUNY Trustees any comments in an appendix to this report that will follow as soon as the Institute can review district comments and complete the scoring. The Institute will provide the preference scores and rank for each proposal in a separate document.

As the proposals for Success Academy Charter Schools 1 – 14 met the minimum eligibility criteria set forth in the RFP and met or exceeded the Institute’s high expectations for recommendation, the Institute will score and rank the proposals in relation to the 11 Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP’s Scoring Rubric. The purpose of the Scoring Rubric is to rank proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees’ requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued in 2014. In the event of a tie for the last charter available in New York City, both proposals will be rejected unless one applicant agrees to withdraw his or her proposal for consideration in a subsequent RFP. The preference criteria include the demonstration of the following in compliance with Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii):

- increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing high school graduation rates and focusing on serving specific high school student populations including, but not limited to, students at risk of not obtaining a high school diploma, re-enrolled high school drop-outs, and students with academic skills below grade level;
- focusing on the academic achievement of middle school students and preparing them for a successful transition to high school;
- utilizing high-quality assessments designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply, critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats;
- increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- partnering with low performing public schools in the area to share best educational practices and innovations;

- demonstrating the management and leadership techniques necessary to overcome initial start-up problems to establish a thriving, financially viable charter school; and,
- demonstrating the support of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such school district.

The Institute is recommending the approval of all 17 proposals received pursuant to the RFP, including the proposals for Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 – 14, but is awaiting the receipt of district comments, which will inform the final scoring and ranking of the proposals. The final scores and rankings for all 17 proposals will be available at the October 8, 2014 Charter Schools Committee meeting.

Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposals and interviews of the applicant and the Education Corporation’s board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings for each proposed school.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
 - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, personnel matters and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act, federal law and the U.S. Constitution;
 - the inclusion of by-laws for the operation of the Education Corporation’s board of trustees; and,
 - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the school on surrounding public and private schools.

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):
 - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - the articulation of a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
 - an appropriate roster of educational personnel;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - the provision of sound start-up, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
 - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;

- evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach anticipated enrollment;
 - the inclusion of descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least, annually;
 - the inclusion of a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - the inclusion of methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.
3. Granting the proposal: a) is likely to improve student learning and achievement, and materially further the purposes of the Act set forth in Education Law § 2850(2); and b) would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(2)(d). This finding is reflected by (among other things):
- an educational program identical to the one implemented in the schools the Network currently manages, which that have demonstrated the ability to improve student learning and achievement;
 - a comprehensive plan to assess student achievement through the use of state tests, externally-verifiable standardized tests and other diagnostic assessments;
 - an extended school day with an intensive focus on literacy and mathematics, with 100 minutes of daily reading instruction, 30 minutes of daily writing instruction, and 80 minutes of daily mathematics instruction for each student;
 - the inclusion of significant opportunities for professional development of the school’s instructional staff prior the start of each school year and throughout the year;
 - a commitment to providing an educational program focused on outcomes, not inputs; and,
 - an organizational structure that supports the ability of the principal to focus exclusively on improving teaching and student learning.
4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, of students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program as required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for the school, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).

6. The Institute has determined that the proposal rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best satisfies the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, is a “qualified application” within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the Board of Regents for approval.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposals to grant the Education Corporation the authority to operate Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC 1 - 14 commencing on the respective dates in 2015 and 2016 set forth in the application.