SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH BUFFALO CREEK ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


Buffalo Creek intends to operate one middle-high school to be located in a private facility in Buffalo City School District (the “district”). The proposed school will open in August 2020 with 112 students in 5th–6th grade, and ultimately serve 336 students in 5th–10th grade during its first charter term. If renewed, the school would add the rest of the high school grades one year at a time. Buffalo Creek will fill all seats that become available as the result of attrition in all grades.

After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), the Institute finds that the proposal for Buffalo Creek rigorously demonstrates the criteria detailed in the RFP, which align with the Act.

Based on the proposal, as amended, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School.
FINDINGS

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposal and interviews of the applicant and the proposed education corporation board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of the Act 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 and federal law;
   - 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 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;
   - appropriate rosters 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 is likely to: a) have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school; b) improve student learning and achievement; and, c) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):
   - a small school model that allows for a high level of individualized support and attention for students organized into lower, middle, and upper academies;
• a commitment to cultivating students’ civic engagement as demonstrated by the implementation of a curriculum that exposes students to multicultural global perspectives;
• an emphasis on structure as a means of building a strong school culture in which students feel cared for and supported;
• support from a wide range of local individuals and organizations including community- and faith-based organizations, businesses, and higher education professionals; and,
• an academic curriculum that provides early exposure to critical 21st-century skills through computer science classes for students at all grade levels.

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 New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) for approval.

The Institute developed the RFP “in a manner that facilitate[d] a thoughtful review of charter school applications, consider[ed] the demand for charter schools by the community, and s[ought] to locate charter schools in a region or regions where there may be a lack of alternatives and access to charter schools would provide new alternatives within the local public education system that would offer the greatest educational benefit to students,” in accordance with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b). The Institute also posted the draft RFP for public comment and responded to same.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposal under consideration including academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposal based on the criteria set forth in the RFP. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute conducted an interview with the founding team including the applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key Buffalo Creek leadership. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team.

Currently, the SUNY Trustees and the Board of Regents may approve 99 charters outside of New York City.
BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

Buffalo Creek’s lead applicant, Christopher Manning, is a fellow with BES, a nationally recognized organization that identifies, recruits, and supports emerging school leaders in developing and starting charter schools in high need areas nationwide. BES will provide ongoing support in the areas of leadership, operations, organizational capacity, governance, and school design throughout the school’s planning year and first year of operation. Additionally, if authorized, Buffalo Creek will receive financial support from BES in the amount of $325,000 to offset costs associated with school startup.

As detailed below, Buffalo Creek intends to provide a high quality middle and high school option to students on Buffalo’s East Side. The school will balance rigorous academics and a structured environment with a high level of support and care for students. The curriculum will focus on literacy and mathematics, with particular emphasis on computer science courses for students at all grade levels. Taking inspiration from the SUNY-authorized Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools (“Democracy Prep”), Buffalo Creek intends to encourage active citizenship among students through the implementation of a curriculum that approaches civics from a global perspective. The school will divide students into a lower academy (5th and 6th grade), middle academy (7th – 9th grade), and upper academy (10th – 12th grade). This approach will enable school staff members to provide individualized supports for all students in alignment with the school’s key design elements.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Buffalo Creek mission is as follows:

Through rigor and structure, Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School prepares 5th – 12th grade students to graduate from college and positively impact our community.

All programming at Buffalo Creek is founded on the following key design elements:

- **Rigorous Academics that Prepare Students to Excel in and Graduate from College.** Buffalo Creek aims to prepare all students for college and post-secondary success. To that end, the school intends to implement a rigorous academic program aligned to Next Generation New York State Learning Standards in English language arts (“ELA”), mathematics, science, and social studies. Course curricula will draw upon a variety of research-based programs as detailed below. In addition to these core subject areas, students will have the opportunity to take computer science classes. In all subject areas, Buffalo Creek will implement research-based academic curricula and use resources with a proven track record of success in improving student outcomes.

- **Frequent Assessments and a Focus on Results.** Regular assessments and close analysis of the resulting data will enable instructional staff members at Buffalo Creek to monitor student academic progress at regular intervals. This, coupled with a robust Response to Intervention (“RTI”) program and a small school design, will empower teachers to provide students with strategic interventions aimed at accelerating academic growth.
• **Structure and Safety within a Values-Driven, Caring Community.** School and classroom culture at Buffalo Creek is organized around the concept of caring, which forms the foundation for all interactions. The school intends to provide a highly structured environment that both supports students and holds them accountable to high expectations. Through the implementation of the core values of leadership, integrity, focus, and excellence, the school aims to equip students with the attributes necessary for success in middle and high school and beyond.

• **Community Engagement and a Global Perspective.** Buffalo Creek intends to emphasize community engagement and implement curricular and extracurricular programs that develop students’ civic mindedness. The school’s approach will encourage students to think about issues in their community from a global, multicultural perspective. Through partnerships with community-based organizations and the implementation of a robust social studies curriculum, students will have the opportunity to complete academic and volunteer projects that benefit their community.

**CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE**

Buffalo Creek will offer approximately 185 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2020 school year will be on or around August 24, 2020, and the last day will be on or around June 23, 2021. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 7:40 A.M. and end at 4:50 P.M. Buffalo Creek will provide lower and middle academy students with more than 1,100 hours of instruction per year, a 22% increase over the state minimum of 900 hours for 1st – 6th grade and an 11% increase over the state minimum of 990 hours for 7th – 12th grade mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5 and provided at the majority of schools within the district.

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

In keeping with Buffalo Creek’s key design element of preparing students for college and post-secondary success, the school intends to develop a rigorous academic program based upon a variety of high quality curricular resources. Teachers will hold students accountable for meeting high academic expectations while providing the individual supports students need to be successful. The school intends to administer formative and summative assessments regularly and use the resulting data to make informed decisions about instruction including interventions for students struggling academically, students with disabilities, and ELLs. Buffalo Creek will provide teachers with frequent professional development aligned to the school’s academic program and instructional techniques. The school intends develop the academic program as follows:

**ELA (Reading and Writing)**

Buffalo Creek will provide lower and middle academy students with 125 minutes of daily ELA instruction, allocating 50 minutes for reading, 50 minutes for writing, and 25 minutes for guided reading. ELA classes will weave together curricula from a variety of resources to construct a rigorous program aligned to New York State Next Generation ELA Learning Standards. For reading, the school will use as its foundation the highly successful curriculum implemented at the SUNY-authorized Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC (“Success Academy”), which uses an inquiry-based approach and incorporates research-based instructional methods such as independent reading, guided reading, read alouds, and text-based
discussions. Within this curriculum students read and discuss a variety of texts and genres including short stories, novels, nonfiction, and poetry. Buffalo Creek intends to implement reading instructional strategies as detailed in the widely used text Reading Reconsidered, a compilation of literacy instructional strategies designed by former Institute Vice President for Accountability Doug Lemov that focuses on oral reading fluency and textual analysis of content-based writing. Writing classes will utilize resources from the research-based Collins Writing Program, with which the lead applicant has extensive experience having worked directly under the program’s developer, Dr. John Collins, at the Harvard University Principal’s Center. Teachers implementing the Collins Writing Program use frequent, short writing assignments to increase student involvement in lessons, check for student understanding of concepts, and promote student thinking about content. The school will complement its writing program with resources from the SUNY-authorized Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools (“Achievement First”).

Upper Academy students at Buffalo Creek will take courses in American literature and world literature in 9th and 10th grade, respectively. 11th and 12th grade students will have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement (“AP”) English classes, rigorous courses designed to prepare students for success in college.

**Mathematics**

Buffalo Creek will provide lower and middle academy students with 100 minutes of daily mathematics instruction. The mathematics curriculum will implement resources from Eureka Math (also known as EngageNY), which aligns with Next Generation New York State Mathematics Learning Standards. Mathematics classes will incorporate two strands: procedures and problem solving. Procedures classes will focus on developing students’ number sense and operational fluency while problem solving classes will enable students to apply those skills to solve novel problems. This approach solidifies foundational skills while simultaneously developing students’ conceptual understanding of abstract mathematical concepts. Buffalo Creek intends to supplement its mathematics program with resources from focusMath, an intensive intervention that accelerates skills development for struggling students, and Khan Academy, an online collection of explanatory videos. In addition, students in need of additional mathematics support will have the opportunity to attend Saturday Academy classes. Starting in 7th grade, students at Buffalo Creek will take a pre-algebra mathematics course; middle and upper academy students will then progress through algebra, geometry, and pre-calculus with the option to enroll in AP calculus or another advanced mathematics course in 12th grade.

**Science**

Buffalo Creek will provide lower and middle academy students with 50 minutes of daily science instruction. The school intends to utilize resources from Success Academy’s science curriculum, which aligns with Next Generation New York State Science Learning Standards. Courses within this curriculum incorporate content from areas such as earth science, life science, chemistry, and the living environment, and classes at all grade levels include a laboratory component. Instruction is inquiry-based, and students have frequent opportunities to engage in hands on activities. Lessons within the curriculum include a mini lesson, an investigation component, and an opportunity for student discourse, which in addition to reinforcing science content will build students’ listening and speaking skills. The curriculum will explicitly connect science and mathematics content and provide opportunities for students to apply those skill sets simultaneously. In the upper academy, students will take Regents level courses including living environment, earth science, chemistry, and physics and also have the option to take AP biology or AP chemistry.
**Social Studies**
Buffalo Creek will provide lower and middle academy students with 50 minutes of daily literacy-based social studies instruction. Social studies classes will draw upon resources from Success Academy, Democracy Prep, and Cambridge Assessment International Education’s (“Cambridge International’s”) Global Perspectives curriculum, an internationally recognized academic program implemented in classrooms around the world. Course content will focus on developing students into active, engaged citizens able to form points of view based on a global perspective. While learning social studies content students will develop research, analysis, evaluation, reflection, collaboration, and communication skills. Social studies classes will also explicitly develop students’ reading skills through rigorous analysis of non-fiction texts. Lower and middle academy students will study global and American history and geography while upper academy students will take Regents courses in global history and American history as well as graduation requirements including participation in government and economics.

**Information Computer Technology**
Buffalo Creek will provide all students with classes in information and computer technology (“ICT”). The school intends to base its program on resources from Cambridge International, which the lead applicant and proposed school leader has experience implementing. ICT courses will expose students to content including computer programming, digital graphics, and website development. Lower academy students will begin by learning basic skills such as word processing, developing simple graphics, and creating spreadsheets; as students progress into the middle and upper academies, ICT classes will expose students to increasingly rigorous topics such as network development, video animation, and website design.

**Physical Education**
Students in all grades at Buffalo Creek will take physical education classes that cover topics ranging from nutrition and self care to athletics and both team and individual sports.

**SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE**
Buffalo Creek has four core values: leadership, integrity, focus, and excellence (“LIFE values”). Underpinning Buffalo Creek’s culture is its focus on “care factor,” a term that encompasses the school’s ethos of holding students accountable for demonstrating its LIFE values while simultaneously providing them with the support they need to navigate challenging circumstances successfully. Through the use of common nurturing language and daily rituals, all school staff members will convey that they care for the students at the school.

The school will also provide a high level of structure that holds students accountable for their actions and issue consequences accordingly. The school’s behavior management system enables students to earn “care credits” for exemplary behavior, which accumulate throughout the week and act as a tangible representation of student progress. Events and activities such as awards ceremonies, town halls, community service days, and individual support sessions further support the development of a school culture in which students feel supported and cared for.
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Buffalo Creek’s executive director retains primary responsibility for overseeing the school’s academic, financial, and organizational health. In Year 1, the executive director will oversee a leadership team comprised of a director of operations, dean of students, student support coordinator, and curriculum coordinator who will directly supervise staff members in their respective areas. In Year 2, the leadership team will add a lower academy principal followed by a middle academy principal in Year 4, who will supervise all teachers in their respective grade ranges. The school’s founding leaders intend to cultivate a talent pipeline in order to fill key leadership roles with individuals who have institutional knowledge and can effectively support the school as it grows.

GOVERNANCE

The by-laws of Buffalo Creek indicate that the proposed education corporation board will consist of no fewer than seven and no more than 15 voting members. The proposed members of the board of trustees are set forth below:

1. **Candace Moppins, Proposed Board Chair**

Ms. Moppins is a Buffalo native and executive director of the Metro Community Development Corporation, based out of the Delavan-Grider Community Center. After studying at the City University of New York, Ms. Moppins became a registered nurse, completing her studies at Trocaire College’s main campus in Buffalo.

2. **Ivory Robinson, Proposed Vice Chair**

Mr. Robinson is a Buffalo native and founder, president, and chief executive officer of HarpData, an executive information technology consulting and advisory firm. An Air Force veteran, Mr. Robinson holds a bachelor of science degree in computer operations technology from Southwestern College.

3. **William Oliver, Proposed Treasurer**

Mr. Oliver is a Western New York native and financial advisor for Northwestern Mutual, a Fortune 500 financial service company. An Army veteran, Mr. Oliver holds a bachelor of science degree in business and administration management with a concentration in finance from SUNY Buffalo.

4. **Victoria Mueller, Proposed Secretary**

Ms. Mueller is a Buffalo native and community manager at the Benchmark Group, a commercial and residential real estate corporation with a nearly one billion dollar portfolio. Ms. Mueller holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and master of business administration from SUNY Buffalo.

5. **Andre Geddes, Proposed Trustee**

Mr. Geddes the principal of Harlem Prep Middle School, part of the Democracy Prep network. Previously he worked as a teacher and school leader at Success Academy, and he also works as a graduate professor at Touro College. Mr. Geddes earned his bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts and master of arts degree in teacher education from Farmingdale State University.
6. **Jennifer Pincoski, Proposed Trustee**

Ms. Pincoski is a Buffalo native and special education school improvement specialist at Erie 1 BOCES. She has over ten years of experience working in special education and teacher development and holds teacher certifications in both New York and Florida. Ms. Pincoski earned her bachelor of arts degree in English and psychology from Canisius College and her master’s degree in school counseling from SUNY Buffalo.

7. **Cedric Holloway, Proposed Trustee**

Mr. Holloway is a Buffalo native and detective sergeant who commands the SWAT unit of the Buffalo Police Department, where he is a 26-year veteran. He is also the president and chair of the executive board for Omega Mentoring, an organization of volunteers and mentors for at risk youth. Mr. Holloway holds a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice and law enforcement administration from SUNY Buffalo.

8. **Simone Ragland, Proposed Trustee**

Ms. Ragland is a Buffalo native and director at the SUNY Buffalo Science and Technology Enrichment Program. A former social worker, Ms. Ragland holds a bachelor of science degree in community mental health from SUNY Empire State College and master of social work degree from the SUNY Buffalo School of Social Work.

9. **Jessica Smith, Proposed Trustee**

Ms. Smith is a Buffalo native and attorney with the Erie County Medical Center, previously serving as an attorney with HoganWillig as well as staff attorney for Neighborhood Legal Services. Ms. Smith holds a bachelor of arts degree in government from Saint Lawrence University and juris doctorate degree from Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law at Barry University.
FACILITIES

Buffalo Creek intends to locate on the East Side of Buffalo, educating students within the zip codes 14211, 14212, and 14215, all of which are areas of chronic academic need requiring high quality school options. The founding group plans to identify a facility in which to incubate during the first two to three years of operation with the intention of moving into a permanent facility in the third or fourth year of operation. The school’s founding team includes several individuals with knowledge of the real estate landscape in Buffalo. Additionally, Buffalo Creek is coordinating with a Buffalo-based real estate company to identify potential facility options.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of Buffalo Creek on the district is summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charter Year</th>
<th>A.</th>
<th>B.</th>
<th>C.</th>
<th>D.</th>
<th>E.</th>
<th>F.</th>
<th>G.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 (2020-21)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>$13,494</td>
<td>$1,511,328</td>
<td>$266,894</td>
<td>$1,778,222</td>
<td>$927,400,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5 (2024-25)</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>$13,494</td>
<td>$4,533,984</td>
<td>$806,683</td>
<td>$5,340,667</td>
<td>$927,400,000</td>
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The Institute reviewed the charter school’s proposed startup and fiscal plan for each year of the proposed charter term and supporting evidence including facility projected costs and philanthropic commitment letters through the Cullen Foundation and board commitments for each of the years in the charter term. The capacity of the education corporation was reviewed to determine its capacity to operate a school in New York. The Institute finds these budgets and fiscal plans to be sound, and sufficient startup funds will be available to the new charter school.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal, and the proposal was posted on the Institute’s website for public review. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school for March 20, 2019. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. A summary of public comments is provided in Appendix A.
PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a) requires authorizers to establish a scoring rubric and grant priority to applications meeting both statutory and authorizer standards. The purpose of the preference criteria is to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees’ requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued in 2019. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility requirements and mandated preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY’s additional criteria. (See 2019 RFP at 10 or Replication RFP at 9.) The Buffalo Creek proposal met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- the proposal was sufficiently complete, i.e., it included a Transmittal and Summary form, Proposal Summary, and responses to all RFP requests as prescribed by the Institute;
- the proposal included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program (as detailed in Request 5); and,
- the proposal provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the Act and the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school and its academic program (as detailed in Request 4).

As Buffalo Creek’s proposal submission met the eligibility criteria, the Institute’s evaluation continued with a full review of the proposal, an interview of the application team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposal in relation to the 10 Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP’s Preference Scoring Guidance. The Preference Criteria, which in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, 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.

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i-ii), (g), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the application for one new charter as proposed Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School earned a score of 18.75 preference points out of a maximum of 45. Based on this score and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute recommends that the SUNY trustees approve the establishment of Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School, which does not exceed the statutory limit in Education Law § 2852(9)(a).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish Buffalo Creek Academy Charter School to open in August 2020.
On or about February 27, 2019, in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal to establish Buffalo Creek. The notice reminded the district that New York State Commissioner of Education’s regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. A redacted copy of the Buffalo Creek proposal was also posted on the Institute’s website for public review at: [http://www.newyorkcharters.org/request-for-proposals/2019-suny-request-for-proposals-round-2-spring-cycle/buffalo-creek-academy-charter-school/](http://www.newyorkcharters.org/request-for-proposals/2019-suny-request-for-proposals-round-2-spring-cycle/buffalo-creek-academy-charter-school/).

The district scheduled a hearing pertaining to the proposed school for March 20, 2019 and provided the Institute a summary of comments made. Ten people attended the public hearing held at Buffalo City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo, NY. Five of the attendees were members of the Buffalo Creek founding team including the proposed executive director and four proposed board members; three attendees were Buffalo City School District board members; and, two were district staff members. The proposed executive director of Buffalo Creek and two proposed board members advocated on behalf of the school, citing the “care factor” and rigorous academic program in their support for the school. One member of the Buffalo City School District board expressed concerns about the fiscal impact of charter schools on the district and the ability of the proposed school to enroll a sufficient number of students.

The Institute received direct comments in the form of letters of support for the proposed school from professionals at multiple community- and faith-based organizations in Buffalo such as the Buffalo Urban League, Mount Olive Baptist Church, VOICE-Buffalo, and Teach For America. The Institute also received letters of support from individuals at Buffalo-based higher education institutions including SUNY Buffalo, SUNY Buffalo State, Canisius College, and Medaille College. Proponents of the proposed school cite its rigorous academic program and stated desire to develop students’ citizenship skills in their support for the school.

While the district did not present comments or opposition specific to the Buffalo Creek application, the district copied the Institute on a letter requesting the Board of Regents reject two other proposals before them for new charter schools in Buffalo. The district also attached a resolution from 2017 requesting a moratorium on charter schools in Buffalo for both authorizers.
### Buffalo Schools Demographics 2017-18

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<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>At-Risk Subgroups</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
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<td>ELL</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
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<td>SWD</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
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### Buffalo Schools ELA and Math Proficiency 2018-19

| Grade 3 ELA            | 32.2%      | 5-10             |
| Grade 4 ELA            | 17.6%      | 21.4%            |
| Grade 5 ELA            | 25.2%      | 22.0%            |
| Grade 6 ELA            | 18.1%      | 19.7%            |
| Grade 7 ELA            | 26.6%      | 16.1%            |
| Grade 8 ELA            | 24.6%      | 16.6%            |

| Grade 3 Math           | 27.9%      | 5-10             |
| Grade 4 Math           | 27.9%      | 21.4%            |
| Grade 5 Math           | 22.0%      | 22.0%            |
| Grade 6 Math           | 16.1%      | 19.7%            |
| Grade 7 Math           | 16.6%      | 16.1%            |
| Grade 8 Math           | 20.6%      | 16.6%            |

### Buffalo Graduation Rate 2017-18

| All Students           | 64.5%      | 5-10             |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 63.4%    |
| English Language Learner: | 40.8%    |
| Students with Disabilities | 44.8%    |