



MEMORANDUM

December 23, 2020

To: Members of the Charter Schools Committee

From: Joseph W. Belluck, Chair, Charter Schools Committee

Subject: Approval of Revision to the Charter of Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (Albany)

Action Requested

The proposed resolution authorizes a revision of the charter of Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls, currently serving 9th through 12th grade, to expand to operate a 6th through 8th grade middle school program commencing with 6th grade in the 2021/22 school year pursuant to New York Education Law § 2852(7).

Resolution

I recommend that the Charter Schools Committee adopt the following resolution:

Whereas Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (the "Education Corporation"), located in Albany, which serves approximately 350 students in 9th through 12th grade, desires to revise its charter to add a 6th through 8th grade middle school program to serve approximately 400 students in 6th and 7th grade and 9th through 12th grade by the 2022/23 school year, the final year of the Education Corporation's charter term (the "Proposed Change in Program"); now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Proposed Change in Program be, and hereby is, approved; and, be it further

Resolved that the Charter Schools Committee finds: 1) the Proposed Change in Program meet the requirements of Article 56 of the New York Education Law (and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations); 2) approval of the Proposed Change in Program (together with the other terms of the Education Corporation's charter) would permit the Education Corporation to operate its school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; and, 3) approval of the Proposed Change in Program is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in Education Law § 2850(2); and, be it further

Resolved that the State University of New York Charter Schools Institute (the "Institute"), acting for the Board of Trustees, be, and hereby is, directed: 1) to enter into a proposed revision to the Education Corporation's charter in accordance with this resolution, which proposed revised charter shall include such assurances and terms as the Institute deems necessary and appropriate; and, 2) thereafter, to submit the proposed revision to the New York State Board of Regents for its review, comment and potential approval.

Background

Pursuant to Resolution No. 2012-038, dated June 12, 2012, the Board of Trustees delegated authority to revise charters to the Charter Schools Committee. The State University of New York Charter Schools Institute (the "Institute") determined that the changes set forth in this resolution require a revision of the charter school education corporation's charter pursuant to Subdivision 2852(7), which must be approved by the Board of Trustees in its capacity as a "charter entity" under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the "Act").

The Board of Trustees approved the charter of Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls (the "Education Corporation") on January 27, 2009, and it opened in the fall of 2010. The Board of Trustees granted the school a short-term, three year renewal in February of 2015 and a full-term, five year renewal in January of 2018. (See the Institute's renewal report available at: https://www.newyorkcharters.org/wp-content/uploads/Albany-Leadership_2017RenewalRecommendationReport.pdf). The overall health of the Education Corporation – academically, fiscally, and operationally – is positive. (See the Institute's School Performance Summary, which was

distributed to the Board of Trustees, and contains positive student performance information.)

The Education Corporation is the first all-girls, public charter high school in Albany, New York. Since its founding, the school has enrolled 9th graders from low performing middle schools who start high school with significant academic deficits. By the end of their fourth year at the school, 90% of students graduate after completing a rigorous course of study. In keeping with its college preparatory mission, the Education Corporation maintains partnerships with two local colleges: The University at Albany, SUNY; and, Hudson Valley Community College to offer college level courses through the school's University in the High School program including courses in English, world studies, Spanish, psychology, sociology, pre-calculus, human resource management, and public administration. Last year, 75% of graduates demonstrated college readiness by passing college level coursework while still enrolled in high school. The Education Corporation also supports students' college attainment through specialized and purposeful programming that builds students' executive skills and prepares them for the overall college experience.

The Education Corporation supported its entire school community during the transition to remote learning in March 2020. The school created virtual and interactive classrooms to deliver remote instruction in continuous alignment with state standards. The school distributed 180 Chromebooks to ensure students in need continued to access the educational program. The school's kitchen staff provided breakfast and lunch to families daily through the school closure period. The school's office staff, culture team, and student support team were also instrumental in ensuring families' connections to community resources as the pandemic closure wore on.

The Institute reviewed the proposed middle school program elements (including enrollment projections, curriculum, and staffing), policies, and budgets, and found them satisfactory. The Institute reviewed the most recent audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020, and finds the fiscal health of the school to remain strong. The school consistently reports operating surpluses and maintains a strong 5.9 months of cash on hand to pay bills coming due shortly. As of June 30, 2020, net assets were \$2.5 million. (See the Institute's most recent Fiscal Dashboard that was distributed to the Board of Trustees). The Institute also reviewed the proposed revision from the legal perspective, and finds it suitable under the Act and applicable law. Therefore, the Institute recommends that the Charter Schools Committee approve the requested revision.

Pursuant to Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute properly notified the school district in which the education corporation is located regarding the receipt

of an application for charter revision. As of December 18, 2020, the Institute received no comments.