MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Trustees

From: Susan Miller Carello, Executive Director, SUNY Charter Schools Institute

Subject: SUNY Charter Schools Institute Update

2020 Request for Proposals

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) released the draft 2020 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) on January 17, 2020 for public comment. The Institute released the final RFP on February 3, 2020. As is our usual practice, we announced the commencement of the first round with full applications due on February 18, 2020, and will finalize dates for the second round in late spring. There are 96 charters available for applicants seeking to open schools outside New York City.

The Institute anticipates presenting proposals recommended for approval to the Charter Schools Committee in June 2020. The earliest opening date for any school approved in this cycle is fall 2021.

Active Ingredients

As an authorizer, it is the Institute’s responsibility to create an environment where great schools can take root and thrive. We measure that, in part, through the traditional lens of student academic performance. However, we know our schools are doing more than teaching reading, writing, math, science, and the arts. Many are exploring or creating new measures of student success that are mission-aligned and address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of their students. We launched our Active Ingredients initiative to explore these critical levers including how they can be credibly collected, measured, used for internal improvement, and perhaps, replicated elsewhere. In early December, we visited NYC Autism and Broome Street Academy Charter Schools, our two SUNY participants, to learn more about their unique measures and their progress.

The Institute held a Mid-Pilot convening February 3rd – 5th. There, six authorizers from across the country, along with their participating Active Ingredients schools, had the opportunity to share updates, discuss challenges and opportunities, participate in workshops, and learn from one
another. This is challenging, important work and we look forward to reflecting on the experience and sharing details on outcomes and next steps in the weeks and months ahead.

**Governance Toolkit on Institute Website**

The Institute anticipates releasing a toolkit of governance resources on its website in early March. The goal of the toolkit is to share best practices and build capacity among SUNY authorized charter school boards and their trustees. The toolkit includes samples of various model documents and processes from high-performing boards, a comprehensive scope of recommended topics for board meetings broken down by month and topic, and other resources. The Institute will expand the toolkit in coming months to include more guidance materials, and will incorporate feedback from the community on the initial documents.

**School Safety Training and Resources**

The Institute is developing a cache of resources consisting of updated materials and newly created guidance documents pertaining to school safety topics including discipline, child abuse reporting, violent and disruptive incident reporting, Title IX, social media policies, and fingerprinting of school staff. The Institute is also working to create a comprehensive compliance list for schools in these areas and to share best practice models from SUNY authorized schools. Institute staff are developing presentations on these topics, and will coordinate with the New York Charter Schools Association and the New York City Charter School Center to communicate these resources to the largest number of constituent schools.

**Information Update**

The Institute’s monthly newsletter More Great Seats for Kids is available [here](#). The Institute’s Director for Charter School Information, Michael Lesczinski, and Executive Deputy Director for Accountability, Jeff Wasbes, recorded and posted a podcast that discusses the renewal process, quantitative and qualitative benchmarks, evidence collection, and what it means for a school to be an academic success. Click [here](#) to listen to the episode.