



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Cosimo Tangorra, Jr. *Cosimo Tangorra Jr.*
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Revision to Charter Authorized by the
Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
(NYCDOE)
DATE: February 5, 2015
AUTHORIZATION(S): *Elizabeth R Berlin*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Regents approve the proposed charter revision for Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (BACS), which is authorized by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State Statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the February 2015 meeting of the Board of Regents.

Background Information

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (or "the School") was first authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE as a charter school to open for the 2008-2009 school year. The School is in its second charter term and was issued a full renewal in March 2013. The School is authorized to serve 1,365 students in Grades K-11 at the end of its charter term, June 30, 2018. The School currently enrolls 979 students in grades K-8 and is projected to reach full scale in 2018-2019, contingent on renewal.

The Chancellor of the NYCDOE recommends the following actions:

- increase the maximum authorized charter enrollment, and
- change its curricular model.

The chart below outlines the material terms of the Brooklyn Ascend Charter School's charter and the proposed revision.

Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	
Board Chair(s)	Stephanie Mauterstock
School Leader(s)	Johana Andujar (Lower ES), Janna Genzlinger (Upper ES/MS)
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Ascend Learning
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School Districts 18 (Grades K-3) and 17 (Grades 4-8)
Physical Address(es)	205 Rockaway Parkway, Brooklyn 11212 (Grades K-3)
	123 East 98th Street, Brooklyn 11212 (Grades 4-8)
Facility Owner(s)	Private
School Opened For Instruction	2008-2009
Current Charter Term Expiration Date	June 30, 2018
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-11
Current Authorized Enrollment	1,365
Proposed Changes with Material Charter Revision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the maximum authorized enrollment. 2. Change its curricular model.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed revised charter: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will permit the charter school to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the above listed charter revision as proposed by Chancellor of the NYCDOE and the provisional charter for the Brooklyn Ascend Charter School is amended accordingly.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for BACS authorized enrollment change would take effect beginning on July 1, 2015. The Regents action for BACS curricular model change would take effect upon approval by the Board of Regents.

Attachment

School: Brooklyn Ascend Charter School (84K652)
CSDs: 17 & 18
Enrollment/ Grades Served in 2014-2015:1 979/ K-8

Revision Background

- Brooklyn Ascend Charter School received a full renewal in March 2013. At the time of renewal, the School demonstrated academic achievement and progress.
- The only year for which the NYCDOE issued a Progress Report² during the school's current charter term, 2012-2013, the School earned an overall grade of D and was in the bottom percentile of all K-8 public schools in New York City. However, the school's percent of students proficient in both ELA and math exceeded that of both Community School Districts (CSDs) of location, 17 and 18.
- The school improved the percent of students' proficient in both ELA and math from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year. In ELA the percent proficient increased from 22% to 29%, and in math the percent proficient increased from 23% to 26%.
- The increase in students proficient in ELA resulted in an ELA median adjusted growth percentile of 64%, placing them in the 70th percentile of the peer schools.
- The increase in students proficient in math resulted in a math median adjusted growth percentile of 51%, placing them in the 20th percentile of the peer schools.
- According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey Report, 97% of parents who responded to the survey strongly agree or agree "that the school had high expectations for [their] child."³
- The revised enrollment proposal would permit the school to enroll 71 additional students for the current school year, and steadily decline that increase over the balance of the charter term, such that in the 2017-2018 school year, the total enrollment would be only 16 students more than the planned sum in the current charter. The proposed enrollment structure has been designed to increase each lower grade section by no more than three students, resulting in classroom sizes of 29 students on average.
- Since the school continues to phase in an additional grade per year, until it reaches its full grade span of K-12, the following describes how the school seeks to increase its enrollment:
 - 71 additional students (7.3%) over its current charter authorized enrollment in the 2014-2015 school year, from 975 students to 1046 students;
 - 52 additional students (4.7%) over its current charter authorized enrollment in the 2015-2016 school year, from 1105 students to 1157 students;
 - 34 additional students (2.8%) over its current charter authorized enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year, from 1235 students to 1269 students, and;

¹ Enrollment reflects ATS data as of October 31, 2014

² NYC DOE Progress Reports, and the use of grades, were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

³ According to the 2013-2014 NYC School Survey, 70% of parent respondents strongly agree that Brooklyn Ascend Charter School has teachers who have high expectations for their child; another 27% agree with the statement.

- 16 additional students (1.1%) over its current charter authorized enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year, from 1365 students to 1381 students.
- After the spring 2014 lottery, the school had 2,347 students on the waitlist, which demonstrates demand for the school.
- The school is located in private facilities that can accommodate the additional students.
- As part of this material revision, the School also seeks to change its curricular model.
 - The school seeks to adopt new instructional methods that better prepare the students to meet both the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and college readiness, moreso than the school's original curricular model.
 - The school's CMO, Ascend Learning (Ascend), licensed from SABIS all curricula used in the Ascend schools. After the shift to the Common Core Learning Standards, Ascend found that it was necessary to supplement the SABIS curriculum with Ascend-developed curricular materials. Ascend was not satisfied with the schools' historical results on the new Common Core-aligned assessments, and concluded that the SABIS program was not aligned to the expectations of the Common Core in the manner desired by the schools and Ascend. Therefore Ascend decided to no longer continue the agreement with SABIS, and to assume the responsibility of identifying or developing all curricula used in the schools.
 - The curriculum will be known as "Version 2" and fully replace the SABIS curriculum. Version 2 curriculum will include the following academic components:
 - For ELA: Foundations (Elementary School [ES] level), Voyages in English: Grammar and Writing (ES level), Ascend-created Literature Circle (ES level), Social Studies/shared text (ES level, Middle School [MS] level), Guided Reading (ES level), Ascend-created Humanities Program (grade 5)
 - For math: Singapore Math (ES level), Math Stories (ES level), Math Facts (ES level), TERC's Investigations in Number, Data, Space (ES level), Connected Mathematics Project 3 (MS level)
 - For science: A Closer Look (ES level), Science Education for Public Understanding Program (MS level)
 - For Spanish: Sube (grades K-1), Descubre (grades 2-5), ¡Avancemos! (grades 6-8)
 - For ESL: On Our Way to English

**ES/MS students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessments,
compared to CSD, NYC and State averages Over the Current Charter Term**

% Proficient in English Language Arts		
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	21.9%	29.3%
CSD 18	20.3%	21.4%
Difference from CSD 18 *	1.6	7.9
CSD 17	17.1%	19.6%
Difference from CSD 17 *	4.8	9.7
NYC	26.8%	28.3%
Difference from NYC *	-4.9	1.0
New York State **	31.1%	30.6%
Difference from New York State	-9.2	-1.3

% Proficient in Mathematics		
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	23.3%	26.0%
CSD 18	20.6%	23.4%
Difference from CSD 18 *	2.7	2.6
CSD 17	20.2%	22.4%
Difference from CSD 17 *	3.1	3.6
NYC	31.7%	36.2%
Difference from NYC *	-8.4	-10.2
New York State **	31.1%	36.2%
Difference from New York State	-7.8	-10.2

* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served. CSD comparisons are particular to the CSD in which the school was sited each year.

** New York State proficiency rates were taken from data.nysed.gov.

Performance on the NYC Progress Report Over the Current Charter Term

Elementary/Middle School Progress Report Grades	2012-2013	2013-2014
Overall Grade	D	Progress Reports were discontinued beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
Student Progress	F	
Student Performance	C	
School Environment	B	

Enrollment of Special Populations Over the Current Charter Term⁴

Special Population		2012-2013	2013-2014
Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL)	Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	85.0%	85.0%
	CSD 18	88.1%	87.4%
	CSD 17	94.6%	94.3%
	NYC	83.0%	82.4%
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	9.2%	10.3%
	CSD 18	14.9%	15.2%
	CSD 17	15.4%	15.5%
	NYC	18.2%	20.1%
English Language Learners (ELL)	Brooklyn Ascend Charter School	0.4%	0.8%
	CSD 18	4.5%	4.6%
	CSD 17	11.0%	10.6%
	NYC	16.0%	15.1%

Additional Enrollment Information		
	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	K-6	K-7
CSD(s)	18 (Grades K-4) and 17 (Grades 5-6)	18 (Grades K-4) and 17 (Grades 5-7)

⁴ Comparisons of a charter school's special populations to the CSD and City are made relative only to the grades served by the school. For example, if a charter school serves grades kindergarten through five, comparisons of that school's special populations will only be made relative to grades kindergarten through five in the CSD and citywide. CSD comparisons are particular to the grades served in each CSD each year. Enrollment rates reflect demographic characteristics as of June 1st and enrollment as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of enrollment in the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.