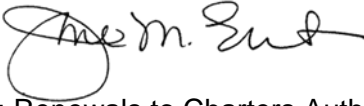
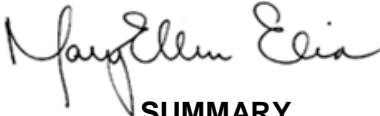




TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Renewals to Charters Authorized by
Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education
(NYCDOE)
DATE: March 11, 2017
AUTHORIZATION(S): 
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Regents approve the proposed renewals to the charters of the following three schools authorized by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE):

1. **Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School** (Full-Term Renewal and Enrollment Decrease)
2. **Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School** (Full-Term Renewal, Enrollment Expansion, and Name Change)
3. **New Heights Academy Charter School** (Short-Term Renewal)

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will be before the Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the March 13, 2017 Regents meeting.

Procedural History

The Chancellor of the NYCDOE approved these three renewal charters and submitted them to the Regents for approval and issuance of the renewal charters as required by Article 56 of the Education Law, the New York State Charter School Statute. The Chancellor of New York City Department of Education asks that the charters be revised as indicated and has provided a summary for each school as set forth below.

Related Regent's Items

Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School

December 8, 2009 – Initial Charter Granted for Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/December2009/1209emsca7.htm>

September 8, 2014 – Material Revision to revise the organizational structure to include a Chief Executive Officer to the school's leadership team
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/914p12a2.pdf>

December 14, 2014 – 2.5 Year Renewal for Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1214p12a3Revised.pdf>

Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School

January 5, 2010 – Initial Charter Granted for Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/January2010/0110emsca2.htm>

March 12, 2015 – 2.5 year Renewal for Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Mar%202015/315p12a6.pdf>

April 11, 2016 – Expansion from K-5 to K-6 with an increased authorized enrollment from 392 students to 480 students [additional 88 students]
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/416p12a6.pdf>

New Heights Academy Charter School

April 13, 2005 – Initial Charter Granted for New Heights Academy Charter School
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2005Meetings/April2005/0405emscvesida1.htm>

March 10, 2009 – Addition of a voluntary after-school program and to open enrollment to new students, through the school's admissions policy, in grade 11, if seats are available.
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2009Meetings/March2009/0309emsca6.doc>

February 5, 2015 – 2.5-Year Short Term Renewal for New Heights Academy Charter School
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/215p12a10.pdf>

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will 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 and issues the renewal charter of the **Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School** as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2022**.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will 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 and issues the renewal charter of the **Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School** as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2022**.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed charter school: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will 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 and issues the renewal charter of the **New Heights Academy Charter School** as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including **June 30, 2020**.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School, Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School, and New Heights Academy Charter School will become effective July 1, 2017.

Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School¹
Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School
Board Chair	Lillian Hamer, M.D.
District of Location	NYC CSD 28
Opening Date	2010-2011
Current Charter Term	Short Term [2.5 years]
Facility	Private
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	K-5/ 275
Mission	<p>Here at the Rochdale Early Advantage Charter school, beginning from Pre-K, REACS scholars will be exposed to various careers. Guided through a step by step cognitive process of familiarization, scholars will then be able to make timely educational decisions that will provide them with a competitive edge when making college bound choices.</p> <p>The Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School (REACS) provides an Early College Preparatory program serving scholars from Kindergarten through Grade 5 (beginning with Kindergarten and First grade in September 2010). REACS is committed to a balanced multiliteracy approach, educating each scholar to "stand out from the crowd" intellectually, historically, culturally, digitally, economically, physically, artistically and civically, in an increasingly diverse and fast-changing global society.</p> <p>Driven by the principles of purpose, passion and proficiency, REACS offers each scholar a challenging, college-bound education that develops character and critical thinking ability infused with family and social values to support life-long learning, leadership and productive citizenship.</p>
Proposed New Charter Term and Revision	Full Term [5 years] Current authorized enrollment decreases from 420 students to 300 students

¹ Additional information can be found in the NYC DOE renewal report at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B73FC500-A4DA-4A67-A413-955F53F69DD7/0/84Q342RochdaleEarlyAdvantageCharterSchoolFINALREPORTWITHRECOMMENDATION.pdf>

Table 2: Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2014-2015	Year 2 2015-2016	Year 3 2016-2017
Grade Configuration	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5
Total Approved Enrollment	420	420	420

Table 3: Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School Proposed Enrollment

	Year 1 2017-2018	Year 2 2018-2019	Year 3 2019-2020	Year 4 2020-2021	Year 5 2021-2022
Grade Configuration	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5	Grades K-5
Total Approved Enrollment	300	300	300	300	300

Table 4: Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School Academic Achievement

	ELA					Math				
	REACS	CSD 28	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	REACS	CSD 28	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	15.0%	34.6%	-19.6%	31.3%	-16.3%	30.0%	44.2%	-14.2%	38.1%	-8.1%
2015-2016	46.0%	43.0%	+3.0%	37.9%	+8.1%	37.0%	44.4%	-7.4%	39.1%	-2.1%

Table 5: Rochdale Early Advantage Charter School Demographics Compared to District of Location

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	REACS	CSD 28	Variance	REACS	CSD 28	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	71.4%	76.2%	-4.8%	72.5%	70.6%	+1.9%
English Language Learners	0.0%	9.3%	-9.3%	0.0%	9.0%	-9.0%
Students with Disabilities	17.5%	14.2%	+3.3%	13.9%	14.0%	-0.1%

REACS enrolls a slightly higher proportion of Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students when compared to the district of location, an approximately equal percentage of Students with Disabilities (SwD), but a smaller percentage of English language learners (ELLs) (Table 5).

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students². The school reports efforts to recruit ELLs that include direct mail advertising in languages other than English; the ESL and second language programs being covered at school open houses; outreach by multi-lingual staff; outreach to specialized feeder schools and programs; specific language in school brochures; information sessions held in trusted cultural centers in the community to attract more families who speak a language other than English; translations, when possible, at school events by using the school staff or the school's parent population; and a special outreach effort to focus on immigrant communities.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC DOE held a public hearing about the proposed revision on November 1, 2016. 114 individuals attended the hearing. 17 comments were made in support and none were made in opposition to the proposed charter revision. Comments in support focused on the school being deserving of a full term 5-year renewal.

² Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. A school's plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school's repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School³
Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School (TFOA)
Board Chair	Shahidah Kalam Id-Din
District of Location	16
Opening Date	2011-2012
Current Charter Term	Short Term [2.5 years]
Facility	DOE
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	K-6/ 419
Mission	The mission of TFOA—Professional Preparatory Charter School, is to prepare our students to become the future professionals (lawyers, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, etc.) who will lead our global society in the 21st Century. We will accomplish this by creating a curriculum that reaches students in multiple ways and creating a community that encourages and breeds academic achievement. Our faculty works closely with our students to identify strengths and weaknesses both academically and otherwise and develop plans to meet their needs.
Proposed New Charter Term and Revision	Full term [5 years] Expand the grades served from K-6 to K-8. Increase the current authorized enrollment from 480 to 792. Change the school's name from Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School to Ember Charter School for Mindful Education, Innovation and Transformation (Ember, or Ember Charter School).

Table 2: Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017
Grade Configuration	Grades K-5	Grades K-6
Total Approved Enrollment	392	480

³ Additional information can be found in the NYC DOE renewal report at http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E3158F34-039D-4D50-B49A-F83F691CE83A/0/84K406TeachingFirmsOfAmericaCharterSchool_FINALREPORTWITHRECOMMENDATION.pdf

Table 3: Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School Proposed Enrollment

	Year 1 2017-2018	Year 2 2018-2019	Year 3 2019-2020	Year 4 2020-2021	Year 5 2021-2022
Grade Configuration	Grades K-7	Grades K-8	Grades K-8	Grades K-8	Grades K-8
Total Approved Enrollment	792	792	792	792	792

Table 4: Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School Academic Achievement

All Students	ELA					Math				
	TFOA	CSD 16	Variance to CSD 16	NYS	Variance to NYS	TFOA	CSD 16	Variance to CSD 16	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	39.2%	21.5%	+17.7%	31.3%	+7.9%	22.5%	22.6%	-0.1%	38.1%	-15.6%
2015-2016	37.6%	29.9%	+7.7%	37.9%	-0.3%	18.7%	26.1%	-7.4%	39.1%	-20.4%

Table 5: Teaching Firms of America Professional Preparatory Charter School Demographics Compared to District of Location

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	TFOA	CSD 16	Variance	TFOA	CSD 16	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	89.4%	86.9%	+2.5%	88.0%	85.5%	+2.5%
English Language Learners	10.0%	4.5%	+5.5%	8.0%	4.1%	+3.9%
Students with Disabilities	15.3%	23.3%	-8.0%	13.9%	23.0%	-9.1%

TFOA enrolls a slightly higher proportion of Economically Disadvantaged (ED) and English language learner (ELL) students when compared to the district of location and a smaller percentage of Students with Disabilities (SwDs) (Table 5).

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students⁴. The school reports efforts to recruit SwDs that include conducting direct outreach to over 50 early childcare centers, shelters and Community-Based Organizations, with a special focus on engaging any staff or coordinators most directly responsible for services to SwDs.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC DOE held a public hearing about the proposed revision on November 16, 2016. 40 individuals attended the hearing. 11 comments were made in support and none in opposition to the proposed charter revision. Comments in support focused on allowing Teaching Firms of America to expand to the 12th grade levels.

⁴ Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. A school's plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school's repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).

New Heights Academy Charter School⁵
Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	New Heights Academy Charter School (New Heights)
Board Chair	Gail Grossman
District of Location	6
Opening Date	2005-2006
Current Charter Term	Short Term [2.5 years]
Facility	Private
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	5-12/ 752
Mission	New Heights' mission is to graduate students who are prepared to succeed in college and life.
Proposed New Charter Term	Short Term [3 years]

Table 2: New Heights Academy Charter School Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017
Grade Configuration	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-12
Total Approved Enrollment	750	750

⁵ Additional information can be found in the NYC DOE renewal report at <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EDA3AA4D-F595-4859-8C95-FD109E34C516/0/84M353NewHeightsAcademyCharterSchoolFINALREPORTWITHRECOMMENDATION.pdf>

Table 3: New Heights Academy Charter School Proposed Enrollment

	Year 1 2017-2018	Year 2 2018-2019	Year 3 2019-2020
Grade Configuration	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-12
Total Approved Enrollment	750	750	750

Table 4: New Heights Academy Charter School Academic Achievement

All Students	ELA					Math				
	New Heights Academy CS	CSD 6	Variance to CSD 6	NYS	Variance to NYS	New Heights Academy CS	CSD 6	Variance to CSD 6	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	16.3%	18.1%	-1.8%	31.3%	-15.0%	18.1%	21.8%	-3.7%	38.1%	-20.0%
2015-2016	29.8%	25.9%	+3.9%	37.9%	-8.1%	22.8%	21.9%	+0.9%	39.1%	-16.3%

Table 5: New Heights Academy Charter School Demographics Compared to District of Location

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	New Heights Academy CS	CSD 6	Variance	New Heights Academy CS	CSD 6	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	96.7%	88.1%	+8.6%	90.5%	85.8%	+4.7%
English Language Learners	11.5%	28.7%	-17.2%	10.7%	26.9%	-16.2%
Students with Disabilities	11.8%	17.1%	-5.3%	11.9%	17.2%	-5.3%

New Heights enrolls a higher proportion of Economically Disadvantaged (ED) students when compared to the district of location but a smaller percentage of English language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SwDs) (Table 5).

The school is making good faith efforts to recruit, serve, and retain at-risk students⁶. The school reports efforts to recruit ELLs and SwDs through outreach to the local Committee on Special Education (CSE) offices in Manhattan and the Bronx. They also have reached out to social services agencies serving these populations. This outreach has led the CSE offices to refer families to the school even after the lottery was conducted. In response to New Height's community demographics, they have also reached out to the Alianza Dominicana, Sinergia, and the Association of Progressive Dominicans, all organizations that cater to native Spanish speakers. The school has added a full-time, dedicated ESL teacher who holds small groups interventions and pushes into classrooms to support students to create a stronger academic program for ELLs. New Heights also has bilingual social workers on staff.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC Department of Education held a public hearing about the proposed revision on October 27, 2016. 70 individuals attended the hearing. 26 comments were made in support and none were made in opposition to the proposed charter revision. Comments in support focused on the school feeling like a family and deserving a 5-year renewal.

⁶ Education Law §2854(2)(a) requires that schools demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, FRPL eligible students and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter is located. SUNY and the Regents were charged with setting specific enrollment and retention targets for each charter school, and have done so. Education Law §2852(9-a)(b)(i). All charter schools that were initially chartered after August 2010 or renewed after January 1, 2011, are expected to meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets set by the Regents and SUNY. When submitting an application for renewal of the charter, schools are required to provide information detailing the means by which they will meet the enrollment and retention targets (Education Law §2851(4)(e)), and this information is considered by the Regents in the review of the school's performance over the charter term. A school's plan to change its enrollment practices, whether by weighting the lottery or preferencing, may also be considered when determining whether the school will meet the targets in the upcoming charter term. A school's repeated failure to meet or exceed its enrollment and retention targets, when combined with a failure to show that extensive efforts to meet the targets have been made, may be cause for termination or revocation of the charter pursuant to section Education Law §2855(1)(e).