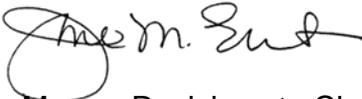




TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Jhone M. Ebert 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Merger Revisions to Charters Authorized by the New York City Department of Education Chancellor
DATE: March 23, 2017
AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents approve the merger of Democracy Preparatory Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the NYC Department of Education), Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the NYC Department of Education), and Harlem Prep Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the SUNY Trustees), with and into Bronx Preparatory Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the SUNY Trustees), with Bronx Preparatory Charter School as the surviving education corporation under the amended name “Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools”?

AND

Should the Board of Regents approve the merger of John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the NYC Department of Education) with and into New Ventures Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the Board of Regents), with New Ventures Charter School as the surviving education corporation under the amended name “Integration Charter Schools”?

AND

Should the Board of Regents approve the merger of New York Center for Autism Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the NYC Department of Education) with and into New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx (an education corporation authorized by the SUNY Trustees), with New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx as the surviving education corporation under the amended name “NYC Autism Charter Schools”?

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 April 3-4, 2017 Regents meeting.

Procedural History

The Commissioner and Department staff forward the revision recommendations for the following charter schools, as proposed by the New York City Department of Education Chancellor in her capacity as a charter school authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law. The New York City Department of Education Chancellor asks that the charters be revised as indicated and has provided a summary for each school as set forth below.

Background Information

DEMOCRACY PREP NEW YORK CHARTER SCHOOLS MERGER¹

Democracy Preparatory Charter School

Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	Democracy Preparatory Charter School
Board Chair	Josh Pristaw
District of Location	NYC CSD 5
Opening Date	SY 2005-2006
Current Charter Term	July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020 (Full Term)
Facility	DOE Operated
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	Grades 6-12 / 718 students
Mission	Democracy Preparatory Charter School’s mission is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

¹ The merger described herein was approved by the SUNY Trustees on March 8, 2017, and notice was sent to the Board of Regents on March 10, 2017. The merger will be approved by operation of law on June 8, 2017. The merger will be effective on July 1, 2017.

Proposed Revision	Democracy Preparatory Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized), Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized), Harlem Prep Charter School (SUNY Authorized), and Bronx Preparatory Charter School (SUNY Authorized) seek to merge into one education corporation authorized by a single charter authorizer. Bronx Preparatory Charter School would be the surviving education corporation, under the amended name “Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools,” and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York would be the successor authorizer.
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Democracy Preparatory Charter School (“DPCS”) is a middle and high school located in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. Grades six to eight are collocated with PS 197 and grades nine to twelve are collocated with PS 92 and St. Hope Leadership Academy Charter School in a NYC DOE-operated building in Community School District 5.²

DPCS name was renewed for a full five-year term in the 2014-15 academic year with an operational/ compliance condition. At the time of renewal, DPCS had demonstrated academic success. As of the school’s most recent annual comprehensive review, the school had outperformed the CSD in ELA and Math. The school performed on par with the city in ELA and outperformed the city in Math.

The revision sought will impact student enrollment.

**Table 2: Democracy Preparatory Charter School
Approved Enrollment**

	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019	Year 5 2019-2020
Grade Configuration	Grades 6-12				
Total Approved Enrollment	710	710	710	715	715

² According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System.

**Table 3: Democracy 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-12				
Total Approved Enrollment	3390	3561	3641	3641	3641

Table 4: Democracy Preparatory Charter School Academic Achievement

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Democracy Prep CS	CSD 5	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	Democracy Prep CS	CSD 5	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	30.0%	19.0%	+11.0%	31.3%	-1.3%	54.5%	13.2%	+41.3%	38.1%	+16.4%
2015-2016	37.1%	23.7%	+13.4%	37.9%	-0.8%	60.5%	13.9%	+46.6%	39.1%	+21.4%

**Table 5: Democracy Preparatory Charter School Demographics
Compared to District of Location**

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	Democracy Prep CS	CSD 5	Variance	Democracy Prep CS	CSD 5	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	74.9%	82.5%	-7.6%	76.5%	80.2%	-3.7%
English Language Learners (Current)	3.7%	8.9%	-5.2%	2.6%	8.8%	-6.2%
Students with Disabilities (Current)	16.6%	20.3%	-3.7%	16.8%	19.7%	-2.9%

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School³

Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
Board Chair	Dr. Robert North
District of Location	NYC CSD 3 and 5
Opening Date	2009-2010
Current Charter Term	February 9, 2015 to June 30, 2019 (Full Term)
Facility	DOE operated
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	Grades K-3; Grades 6-12 / 907 students
Mission	Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School mission is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

³ The merger described herein was approved by the SUNY Trustees on March 8, 2017, and notice was sent to the Board of Regents on March 10, 2017. The merger will be approved by operation of law on June 8, 2017. The merger will be effective on July 1, 2017.

Proposed Revision	Democracy Preparatory Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized), Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized), Harlem Prep Charter School (SUNY Authorized), and Bronx Preparatory Charter School (SUNY Authorized) seek to merge into one education corporation authorized by a single charter authorizer. Bronx Preparatory Charter School would be the surviving education corporation, under the amended name “Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools,” and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York would be the successor authorizer.
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Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School (“DPH”) is an elementary, middle and high school serving kindergarten to grade two, grades six to eight and grades nine to eleven in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. The school is sited in three separate locations. The elementary school is located in a NYC DOE-operated building in Community School District 5 and is co-located with IS201. The middle school is located in Community School District 5 and is not colocated with any other school or program. The high school is located in Community School District 3 and is colocated with the Mid Manhattan and Regional Adult Learning Networks Program and offices.

DPH name was renewed for a full 4.5 year term in the 2014-15 academic year with an academic performance condition and an operational/compliance condition. As of the school’s most recent annual comprehensive review, the school had not performed above the CSD or the city in ELA but had outperformed the CSD and the city in Math.

The revision sought will impact student enrollment.

**Table 2: Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
Approved 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-4; 6-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12
Total Approved Enrollment	913	1093	1201	1309	1309

**Table 3: Democracy Prep Harlem 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-4; 6-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12
Total Approved Enrollment	1101	1182	1182	1182	1182

**Table 4: Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
Academic Achievement**

All Students	ELA					Math				
	Democracy Prep Harlem CS	CSD 5	Variance to CSD 5	NYS	Variance to NYS	Democracy Prep Harlem CS	CSD 5	Variance to CSD 5	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	13.4%	19.0%	-5.6%	31.3%	-17.9%	35.3%	13.2%	+22.1%	38.1%	-2.8%
2015-2016	26.5%	23.7%	+2.8%	37.9%	-11.4%	30.6%	13.9%	+16.7%	39.1%	-8.5%

**Table 5: Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
Demographics
Compared to District of Location**

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	Democracy Prep Harlem CS	CSD 5	Variance	Democracy Prep Harlem CS	CSD 5	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	63.6%	82.5%	-18.9%	76.2%	80.2%	-4.0%
English Language Learners (Current)	5.5%	8.9%	-3.4%	5.6%	8.8%	-3.2%
Students with Disabilities (Current)	17.0%	20.3%	-3.3%	13.8%	19.7%	-5.9%

The Schools submitted the following rationale in support of their revision request. Each of the boards voted in favor of the merger for its benefits in the following areas:

Students: Merging four of the New York City education corporations managed by Democracy Prep Public Schools will allow for greater educational opportunity for students. As one corporation, DPNY can more effectively use the resources of the merged schools to increase opportunity for all DPNY scholars -- from students facing the most challenges to high performers. Last school year, Democracy Prep piloted Democracy Prep Pathways, a nationally recognized intensive special education program that serves a small number of middle school students with significant deficits in reading and math for one to two years in order to return those students to their previous charter school closer to grade level. In the merged DPNY, a Pathways-type program can be extended to many more grades and more students, serving as a central resource for students from the member schools. Similarly, DPNY will be able to create centralized innovative ELL models that can serve students across DPNY schools without artificial barriers raised by the existing governance structure. A merged DPNY can also provide specialized AP classes that might have too small an enrollment if instituted at one campus but, with students from multiple campuses, will be sustainable, increasing its course offerings so that DPNY can continue to increase the rigor of its college prep program.

Staff: Having one employer for all DPNY staff will increase flexibility for each charter. Staff will gain the benefits of increased knowledge-sharing across campuses and the freedom to develop innovative courses that serve the unique needs of particular student populations. Sharing resources and enrollment across the network will mean that each school will be stronger.

School Community: The ability to manage wait lists and enrollment across the schools will provide more opportunity to students who might have been barred from attending a DPNY constituent school because of the individual schools' enrollment wait lists. Students with siblings in other DPNY schools will be able to attend other schools if there is space. Geographic barriers to attendance will be removed as students will have more opportunity to attend more schools in DPNY. If a student needs to transfer schools for safety or accessibility, that student will be able to do so without having to reenter the lottery.

Board of Trustees: DPNY's new structure will provide efficient oversight from a reconstituted board with robust subcommittees focused on each of the constituent schools. A consolidated board will allow those members with a strong commitment to Democracy Prep to continue to serve and will pool their experience. A larger corporation with a single board may also alleviate quorum difficulties. While the governance board will be smaller than the sum of the existing boards, current board members will remain involved in the network as members of an advisory board and will continue to have the opportunity to be directly involved in the schools. Schools will maintain their unique nature but as part of a new whole.

Operations and Finances: DPNY will enjoy increased operational efficiencies. Financially, multiple audit reports will be replaced by one report. Contracts may be extended citywide. Banking relationships will be simplified and greater economies of scale realized. DPNY will have one taxpayer ID and simplified payroll procedures. Moreover, the new DPNY will have one authorizer and will have consistent accountability plans and reporting requirements across each of the schools. This will mean everything as minor as moving from one set of reporting templates (rather than two) to having each school share the priorities and have common oversight of one authorizer.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC DOE held a public hearing about the proposed revision on February 13, 2017. The hearing was held for Democracy Preparatory Charter School, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School, Harlem Prep Charter School and Bronx Preparatory Charter School. There were no attendees at the hearing; therefore, no comments were made in support of or in opposition to the merger.

INTEGRATION CHARTER SCHOOLS MERGER

John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School

Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School
Board Chair	Sheldon Blackman
District of Location	NYC CSD 31
Opening Date	2008-2009
Current Charter Term	April 21, 2014 to June 30, 2018 (Full Term)
Facility	Privately operated
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	Grades 3-12 / 642 students
Mission	John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School provides a rigorous college preparatory education that equips and empowers students to go to college and succeed in life. Lavelle Prep welcomes all students, including those living with emotional challenges. Full integration in all classes and activities enables each student to develop the academic skills, emotional fluency and confidence required to be successful students today and thoughtful, open-minded leaders tomorrow.
Proposed Revision	John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized) and New Ventures Charter School (BOR Authorized) seek to merge into one education corporation authorized by a single charter authorizer. New Ventures Charter School would be the surviving education corporation under the amended name “Integration Charter Schools,” and the New York State Board of Regents would be the successor authorizer.

John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School (“Lavelle Prep”) is a middle and high school located in the borough of Staten Island. The school is located in a private space in Community School District 31.⁴

Lavelle Prep was given a full-term 5-year renewal in the 2013-14 school year. Over the course of the charter term, the school has not outperformed the CSD or the city in ELA or Math.

⁴ According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System.

The revision sought would not impact student enrollment.

**Table 2: John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School
Approved Enrollment**

	Year 1 2014-2015	Year 2 2015-2016	Year 3 2016-2017	Year 4 2017-2018
Grade Configuration	Grades 6-12	Grades 6-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12
Total Approved Enrollment	510	510	902	902

Table 4: John W. Lavelle Prep Charter School Academic Achievement

All Students	ELA					Math				
	John W. Lavelle Prep CS	CSD 31	Variance to CSD 31	NYS	Variance to NYS	John W. Lavelle Prep CS	CSD 31	Variance to CSD 31	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	17.4%	39.1%	-21.7%	31.3%	-13.9%	22.5%	33.9%	-11.4%	38.1%	-15.6%
2015-2016	24.1%	42.3%	-18.2%	37.9%	-13.8%	24.2%	35.1%	-10.9%	39.1%	-14.9%

Table 5: John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School Demographics Compared to District of Location

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	John W. Lavelle Prep CS	CSD 31	Variance	John W. Lavelle Prep CS	CSD 31	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	75.2%	57.0%	+18.2%	67.8%	55.2%	+12.6%
English Language Learners (Current)	2.7%	5.1%	-2.4%	2.2%	5.0%	-2.8%
Students with Disabilities (Current)	35.7%	22.1%	+13.6%	36.0%	22.0%	+14.0%

The Schools submitted the following rationale in support of their revision request:

A. Students: NYCS was established by the leadership of Lavelle Prep to complement and extend the mission of Lavelle Prep; the Schools share a commitment to providing a high-quality education to Staten Island's most underserved student population and to levelling the playing field for students with disabilities and emotional challenges. From the beginning, it was always envisioned that there would be close collaboration between the schools. To that end, the schools have in place a Memorandum of Understanding, effective as of July 1, 2016 (the "MOU"), in which the Schools are sharing a facility (including classrooms and other spaces), personnel and instructional staff. The merger will essentially replace the MOU and institutionalize the partnership between the Schools. The funds saved as a result of taking advantage of operational efficiencies created by the merger will be directed towards enhancing the educational programs of each School, giving students access to space, resources and specialized programming they may not otherwise be able to access, even with the existence of the MOU. Funds saved will also be directed towards teacher development and collaboration across the schools, providing teachers with opportunities to learn and try new methods in order to continuously seek ways to assist all students as they travel their individual paths to success. The shared staffing will allow both Schools greater flexibility in responding to changing student academic needs and interests.

B. Staff: Pursuant to the MOU, the schools already share certain staff, including, but not limited to, the President, Director of Operations, Director of Finance, Assistant Principal, Special Education, Director of Counseling, and Director of IT. In addition, the MOU contemplates that certain members of the Lavelle Prep instructional staff will take on secondary teaching assignments at NVCS and vice versa. The merger will allow staff members to service both Schools without having two different employers, lessening the administrative and financial burdens on the Schools and the staff. In addition, because each School utilizes different learning models, instructional staff teaching in both

schools will have the opportunity to utilize these different teaching models in the classroom, enhancing their teaching skills and ultimately improving the classroom experience of their students.

C. School Community and/or Stakeholders: Because the Schools share a facility (temporarily) and other educational resources, parents and others in the Lavelle Prep School community are not only interested in the performance of Lavelle Prep, but are also interested in the relationship between the Schools. The merger will enable parents and other stakeholders to keep abreast of important developments at both Schools by attending a single Board meeting. The merger will also facilitate collaboration between the Schools and other community institutions such as the Staten Island Historical Society, Wagner College, and the Greenbelt Conservancy, providing a single point of contact for the critical dialogues which lead to innovative, project-based learning opportunities. The School communities are also expected to benefit from positive publicity received by becoming one of the few networks of schools that focuses on students living with special needs and emotional challenges in New York. There is a well-documented need for greater options and innovation in school design for students living with special needs and emotional challenges. The merger of the Schools is the first step in a process which will eventuate in an infrastructure capable of supporting replication of our innovative school designs beyond Staten Island.

D. Board of Trustees: Currently, Lavelle Prep and NVCS are each governed by a separate Board of Trustees comprised of experienced individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Schools' related missions.

Three (3) individuals serve on both Schools' Boards of Trustees. The merger will simplify and streamline the Boards' governance structure, as there will be only one Board of Trustees post-merger, with representatives from each school serving on such Board. The Board will be responsible for the oversight and strategic direction of the education corporation, as well as the two Schools. The consolidated Board of Trustees will be in a better position to understand and make strategic decisions that apply to both Schools, while still having the ability to focus on the oversight of each individual School. In order to ensure that the governance structure meets the needs of both schools, the Board will continue to utilize a robust committee structure. An executive committee, finance and audit committee, and a governance and nominating committee will serve the education corporation, while each School will have its own dedicated education and accountability committee. Each school Principal will be an ex officio member of his/her respective education and accountability committee.

E. Schools' Operations and Finances: The merger will allow Lavelle Prep and NVCS to pool resources so that oversight of the Schools' finances and compliance obligations may be handled more efficiently, from both a cost and time perspective. In addition, the Schools will have more buying power when purchasing items such as technology and educational materials and will be in a better position in the event it is necessary to enter financing arrangements for purchasing and/or improving school facilities in the future.

F. Additional Benefits: Both Schools have developed innovative approaches to providing a high-quality education to underserved populations. The Schools wish to

reach and serve more students by expanding, replicating, and/or creating a new school. Lavelle Prep recently received approval for its K-5 expansion; NVCS will be seeking approval to establish a new program at the School; and the leadership team is working on applications for new schools. The merger will facilitate and streamline the expansion and growth of the Schools.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC DOE held a public hearing about the proposed revision on January 18, 2017. Four individuals attended the hearing. No comments were made in support and none in opposition to the proposed charter revision.

NYC AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOLS MERGER⁵

New York Center for Autism Charter School

Table 1: School Summary

Name of Charter School	New York Center for Autism Charter School
Board Chair	Carol Santiago
District of Location	NYC CSD 4
Opening Date	2004-2005
Current Charter Term	July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020 (Full Term)
Facility	DOE operated
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	Ungraded / 40 students
Mission	The mission of the New York Center for Autism Charter School (NYCACS) is to provide individualized, scientifically based educational services to children with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders. The NYCACS educational program promotes the achievement of high educational standards and the full intellectual, social, physical and emotional potential of each student. NYCACS extends educational programming beyond the school's walls through organized outreach, training, consultation and support for students' families, and offers ongoing professional development opportunities to NYCACS staff and educators in NYC and the surrounding areas.

⁵ The merger described herein was approved by the SUNY Trustees on March 8, 2017, and notice was sent to the Board of Regents on March 10, 2017. The merger will be approved by operation of law on June 8, 2017. The merger will be effective on July 1, 2017.

Proposed Revision	New York Center for Autism Charter School (NYCDOE Authorized) and New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx (SUNY Authorized) seek to merge into one education corporation authorized by a single charter authorizer. New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx would be the surviving education corporation, under the amended name “NYC Autism Charter Schools,” and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York would be the successor authorizer.
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The New York Center for Autism Charter School received a full-term, 5-year renewal in the 2014-15 school year. As part of the school’s charter agreement, the school does not administer the NYS ELA or Math exams, therefore, there is no performance data that can be compared to the CSD and city. All students are alternatively assessed.

The revision sought would not impact student enrollment.

**Table 2: New York Center for Autism Charter School
Approved Enrollment**

	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019	Year 5 2019-2020
Grade Configuration	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded
Total Approved Enrollment	40	40	40	40	40

**Table 3: New York Center for Autism Charter School
Proposed Enrollment**

	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019	Year 5 2019-2020
Grade Configuration	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded	Ungraded
Total Approved Enrollment	40	40	40	40	40

**Table 4: New York Center for Autism Charter School
Academic Achievement**

All Students	ELA					Math				
	NYC Autism CS	CSD 4	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS	NYC Autism CS	CSD 4	Variance to CSD	NYS	Variance to NYS
2014-2015	N/A	23.6%	N/A	31.3%	N/A	N/A	26.4%	N/A	38.1%	N/A
2015-2016	N/A	31.8%	N/A	37.9%	N/A	N/A	27.8%	N/A	39.1%	N/A

**Table 5: New York Center for Autism Charter School Demographics
Compared to District of Location**

	2014 -2015			2015 -2016		
	NYC for Autism CS	CSD 4	Variance	NYC for Autism CS	CSD 4	Variance
Economically Disadvantaged	78.1%	91.0%	-12.9%	78.1%	90.1%	-12.0%
English Language Learners (Current)	3.1%	10.5%	-7.4%	3.1%	9.9%	-6.8%
Students with Disabilities (Current)	100.0%	23.3%	+76.7%	100.0%	22.9%	+77.1%

New York Center for Autism Charter School submitted the following rationale in support of their revision request:

A. Students: A merger will greatly benefit students as the Schools designed to align with one another and share the same goal of providing students diagnosed with autism, all of whom are at risk for academic failure, with a comprehensive program of academic and support services based on the principles of applied behavior analysis. NYCACS Bronx was formed building on the over ten years of academic success and financial stability of NYCACS. The Schools have a shared design and philosophy that represents how the Schools operate and reach their respective students. A merger would allow for easier collaboration of resources to reach its student populations - students in the moderate to profoundly affected end of the autism spectrum.

B. Staff: The Schools already share key leadership staff members, including but not limited to, the Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, Special Education Compliance Specialist, Business Manager, and Executive Administrative Assistant. The merger will allow staff members to service the different schools without having two different employers, lessening the administrative and financial burdens on the Schools and the staff. Savings on staffing and administration will free up resources that could be put to students and into the classroom. The Schools have a high rate of retention especially with senior staff who are in alignment with the shared goal of supporting both schools and the students they serve. A merger would improve the ability of staff to share practices and training.

C. School community and/or Stakeholders: Autism education is of critical importance to our school community and stakeholders. There is a profound need to better serve those students and to help support families severely impacted by autism. Our community is unified with a sense of purpose and yearning for supports both within and outside of the classroom. A merger will improve the Schools' ability to connect with the school community to facilitate discussion and collaboration between parents impacted by autism.

D. Board of Trustees: Currently, the Schools are governed by identical, but separate, boards of trustees comprised of experienced individuals who have demonstrated strong commitment to the Schools' mission. Each board is responsible for holding monthly meetings as required by the New York Open Meetings Law. Currently these meetings are held separately, back to back, and with each board also holding separate meetings at the committee level. This creates redundancy and time pressure for the board members. A consolidated board would allow more time to be spent focusing on the individual needs of the Schools. Further, a consolidated board would be in a better position to understand and make strategic decisions to plan for the Schools' growth and continued success. A streamlined governance structure will save significant time for our boards of trustees' members, lessening their stress and reduces any burnout.

E. School's Operations and Finances: A merger improves the Schools' ability to ensure its compliance and financial obligations are met more efficiently. Shared oversight by a single department overseeing these functions also allows for greater buying power for the Schools when negotiating with vendors and purchasing

educational materials for the School, including specialized materials and customized classroom furniture best suited for our student body.

F. Additional Benefits: The merger may allow the Schools to access federal or private funding for replications that is available only to entities with multiple schools. The Board may also consider expansion in time.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Charter School Act, the NYC DOE held a public hearing about the proposed revision on February 6, 2017. Six individuals attended the hearing. No comments were made in support and none in opposition to the proposed charter revision.

Related Regent's Items

Democracy Preparatory Charter School

December 9, 2005 – Initial Charter Granted for Democracy Prep Charter School
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/Summaries/1205summary>

September 9, 2015 – Pathway Program for Students with Disabilities
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Sep%202015/915p12a4.pdf>

May 11, 2015 – 5-Year Renewal for Democracy Prep Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/May%202015/515p12a1.pdf>

Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School

February 8, 2010- Initial Charter granted for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/Summaries/0210summary.htm>

September 9, 2015 – Pathway Program for Students with Disabilities
<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Sep%202015/915p12a4.pdf>

January 10, 2015 – 4.5 Year, Full Term Renewal for Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School
<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/115p12a4.pdf>

John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School

April 7, 2009 – Initial Charter Granted for Lavelle Prep Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/April2009/0409emsca3.htm>

March 6, 2014 – 4.5 year full term renewal and increased enrollment from 375 students to 510 students for Lavelle Prep Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/314p12a6%5B3%5D.pdf>

February 16, 2016 – Grade Expansion from 6-12 to K-12 and increasing enrollment from 510 students to 902 students for Lavelle Prep Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/216p12a5.pdf>

New York Center for Autism Charter School

April 13, 2005 – Initial Charter Granted for New York Center for Autism Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/documents/meetings/2005Meetings/April2005/0405emscvesida2.htm>

January 30, 2009 – Significant changes to organizational structure for New York Center for Autism Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/February2009/0209emsca1.htm>

June 10, 2015 – 5 Year Renewal for New York Center for Autism Charter School

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Jun%202015/615p12a8.pdf>

Recommendation

Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools

VOTED: That pursuant to the authority contained in Education Law §§223 and 2853(1)(b-1)

1. Democracy Preparatory Charter School be and hereby is merged with Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School, Harlem Prep Charter School, and Bronx Preparatory Charter School, with Bronx Preparatory Charter School as the surviving education corporation under the amended Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools.
2. Bronx Preparatory Charter School, the surviving corporation, shall continue to administer the educational operations and purposes of the constituent corporations in the same manner as they presently exist.
3. The separate existence of Democracy Preparatory Charter School, Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School, Harlem Prep Charter School, and Bronx Preparatory Charter School hereby ceases, and Bronx Preparatory Charter School, the surviving corporation under the amended name Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges, immunities, powers and authority possessed by or granted by law to each of the constituent corporations. All assets and liabilities of the respective constituent corporations are hereby assets and liabilities of such surviving corporation. All property, real, personal and mixed and all debts to each of the corporations on whatever account are hereby attached to Bronx Preparatory Charter School, the surviving corporation under the amended name Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools, and may be enforced against it to the same extent as if the debts, liabilities and duties had been incurred or contracted by it.
4. The merged corporation shall operate under the provisional charter granted to Bronx Preparatory Charter School under the amended name Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools, which is hereby amended to authorize the operation of four public charter schools as follows:
 - i. Democracy Preparatory Charter School,
 - ii. Democracy Prep Harlem Charter School,
 - iii. Harlem Prep Charter School, and
 - iv. Bronx Preparatory Charter School
5. The merger herein shall take effect on July 1, 2017; and it is further

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) **Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) **Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools** can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to revise the charter 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) granting the request to revise the charter would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the schools operated by **Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools**, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for **Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools**, as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

Integration Charter Schools

VOTED: That pursuant to the authority contained in Education Law §§223 and 2853(1)(b-1)

1. John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School be and hereby is merged with New Ventures Charter School, with New Ventures Charter School as the surviving education corporation under the amended name Integration Charter Schools.
2. New Ventures Charter School, the surviving corporation, shall continue to administer the educational operations and purposes of the constituent corporations in the same manner as they presently exist.
3. The separate existence of John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School and New Ventures Charter School hereby ceases, and New Ventures Charter School, the surviving corporation under the amended name Integration Charter Schools is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges, immunities, powers and authority possessed by or granted by law to each of the constituent corporations. All assets and liabilities of the respective constituent corporations are hereby assets and liabilities of such surviving corporation. All property, real, personal and mixed and all debts to each of the corporations on whatever account are hereby attached to New Ventures Charter School, the surviving corporation under the amended name Integration Charter Schools, and may be enforced against it to the same extent as if the debts, liabilities and duties had been incurred or contracted by it.
4. The merged corporation shall operate under the provisional charter granted to New Ventures Charter School under the amended name Integration Charter Schools, which is hereby amended to authorize the operation of two public charter schools as follows:
 - i. John W. Lavelle Preparatory Charter School, and
 - ii. New Ventures Charter School
5. The merger herein shall take effect on July 1, 2017; and it is further

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) **Integration Charter Schools** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) **Integration Charter Schools** can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to revise the charter 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) granting the request to revise the charter would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the schools operated by **Integration Charter Schools**, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for **Integration Charter Schools**, as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

NYC Autism Charter Schools

VOTED: That pursuant to the authority contained in Education Law §§223 and 2853(1)(b-1)

1. New York Center for Autism Charter School be and hereby is merged with New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx, with New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx as the surviving education corporation under the amended NYC Autism Charter Schools.
2. New York Center Autism Charter School Bronx, the surviving corporation, shall continue to administer the educational operations and purposes of the constituent corporations in the same manner as they presently exist.
3. The separate existence of New York Center for Autism Charter School and New York Center for Charter School Bronx hereby ceases, and New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx, the surviving corporation under the amended name NYC Autism Charter Schools is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges, immunities, powers and authority possessed by or granted by law to each of the constituent corporations. All assets and liabilities of the respective constituent corporations are hereby assets and liabilities of such surviving corporation. All property, real, personal and mixed and all debts to each of the corporations on whatever account are hereby attached to New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx, the surviving corporation under the amended name NYC Autism Charter Schools, and may be enforced against it to the same extent as if the debts, liabilities and duties had been incurred or contracted by it.
4. The merged corporation shall operate under the provisional charter granted to New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx under the amended name NYC Autism Charter Schools, which is hereby amended to authorize the operation of two public charter schools as follows:
 - i. New York Center for Autism Charter School, and

ii. New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx

5. The merger herein shall take effect on July 1, 2017; and it is further

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) **NYC Autism Charter Schools** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) **NYC Autism Charter Schools** can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to revise the charter 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) granting the request to revise the charter would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the schools operated by **NYC Autism Charter Schools**, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for **NYC Autism Charter Schools**, as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for the Democracy Prep New York Charter Schools merger will become effective July 1, 2017.

The Regents action for the Integration Charter Schools merger will become effective July 1, 2017.

The Regents action for the NYC Autism Charter Schools merger will become effective July 1, 2017.