



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY,
NY 12234

TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Renewal of a Charter Authorized by the Board of Regents – Global Concepts Charter School
DATE: December 29, 2011
AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposed renewal charter for Global Concepts Charter School.

The following table outlines information about Global Concepts Charter School. Additional information about the school's application for renewal and performance over the current charter is included in the attached renewal recommendation report.

Name of Charter School	Global Concepts Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Dawan D. Jones, Board Chair
District of Location	Lackawanna City School District
Districts Served	Lackawanna City, Buffalo City, Cheektowaga, Cheektowaga Sloan, Cleveland Hill, East Aurora, Frontier, Hamburg, Orchard Park, West Seneca
Opening Date	Fall 2002
Charter Terms	January 16, 2002 through January 15, 2007 (Initial) January 16, 2007 through January 15, 2012 (First Renewal) <i>Proposed 2nd Renewal: January 16, 2012 through June 30, 2016</i>
Management Company	None
Partners	None
Facilities	1001 Ridge Road, Lackawanna (Grades K – 8), owned by charter school 30 Johnson Street, Lackawanna (High School), lease with private landlord
Enrollment and Grade Span during Current Charter Term	365 students in grades K – 5 in 2006-2007 745 students in grades K – 10 in 2011-2012 <i>Proposed 2nd Renewal: Requested expansion to a maximum enrollment of 967 students in grades K – 12 reached in 2014-15 and maintained through 2016-17.</i>

Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	Maximum enrollment of 967 students in grades K – 12 reached in 2014-15 and maintained through 2016-17.
Mission Statement	“The mission of the Global Concepts Charter School is to provide a top-quality educational program where students achieve high academic results; are geared towards higher education and career opportunities; become responsible, caring family and community members; are highly knowledgeable of the multicultural world they are part of; and possess the qualities and problem solving skills to collaborate peacefully in the community and worldwide.”

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 the renewal application of the Global Concepts Charter School and that a second renewal charter be issued, and that its provisional charter be extended for a term up through and including June 30, 2016.

Timetable:

The Regents action for the Global Concepts Charter School will become effective immediately.

Attachment



New York State Education Department Charter School Office

Charter School Renewal Report

Global Concepts Charter School
Application for 2nd Charter Renewal

December 29, 2011

Report Introduction

This report is the primary means by which the Charter School Office of the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) summarizes for the New York State Board of Regents its findings and recommendations regarding a charter school’s Renewal Application.

Charter School Summary

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Background

The Board of Regents granted an initial charter to Global Concepts Charter School (“Global Concepts”) in December 2001. The school opened in Lackawanna, NY, in September 2002 with 172 students in grades K through 3. The school added grades 4 and 5 in the subsequent two academic years, ending its first charter term in the 2006-2007 school year with 365 students in grades K through 5. The Regents granted a five year renewal to the school in December 2006, and also permitted the school to add a middle school program. The Regents approved a charter revision in February 2010 to allow the school to add a high school program. In the 2011-2012 school year, the school serves 745 students in grades K through

10 on two campuses at its facilities located at 1001 Ridge Road and 30 Johnson Street, both in Lackawanna. Through its renewal application, the school requests to complete high school expansion plans to Grade 12.

Required Findings and Recommendation

Based on the Department’s review of the evidence submitted by Global Concepts and gathered by the Department, including, but not limited to, the school’s Renewal Application, evaluation visits conducted during the charter term, and the school’s record of educational success based on NYS assessment data, the Department makes the following findings required by NYS Education Law Article 56, the Charter Schools Act (the “Act”):

- Global Concepts Charter School, as described in its Renewal Application, meets the requirements of the Act and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- The school has demonstrated the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner in the next charter period;
- Approving the renewal application is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in the Act in Education Law §2850(2); and
- Approving the renewal application would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend Global Concepts.

Therefore, the Department recommends that the Board of Regents approve the Application for Renewal of Global Concepts and **renew its charter for the term from January 16, 2012, through June 30, 2016**¹ with authority to provide instruction to students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 with a maximum enrollment of 967 students and consistent with the other terms set forth in the renewal charter agreement.

Summary of Public Comment

As required by the Act, the Department notified the Lackawanna City School District and public and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area as Global Concepts about the submission of the school’s Renewal Application. In a letter submitted by Lackawanna Superintendent of Schools, Nicholas D. Korach, on October 12, 2011, the Lackawanna City School District Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools opposed the renewal of Global Concepts and any expansion of the school. The district’s opposition is based on the financial burden and fiscal impact of Global Concept and other charter schools, on small city school districts such as Lackawanna. The district estimates that the 487 Lackawanna students enrolled in charter schools in 2011-2012 (411 of which attend Global Concepts) represents 24.6% of the Lackawanna’s district enrollment. The Lackawanna City School District also held the required public hearing on the renewal of the Global Concepts charter on September 1, 2011. According to a summary of the hearing provided by the district, one commenter expressed opposition to charter schools in general, and one commenter expressed support of charter schools in general. No comments specific to the Global Concepts renewal were expressed at the hearing. The Department has not received general public comment with respect to the Global Concepts Charter School.

¹ The Department is in the process of “right-sizing” all charter terms so that they conclude at the end of a school year. The fact that this charter term is slightly less than the full five-years allowed by law is due to this right-sizing and no other reason.

Summary of Evidence

Educational Success

Global Concepts articulated four academic performance goals for the current charter term, including:

- Goal #1: Each year, students will achieve grade level equivalent academic growth as measured by grade level equivalents on the Terra Nova Standardized Test for grades K, 1, and 2, and in reading for grades 3 through 8. Students who are below grade level will be expected to gain 1.2 grade level equivalent changes by the end of each year.
- Goal # 2: Students who have been enrolled in the Global Concepts for at least three consecutive years will meet New York State Education Learning Standards in core area subjects as established by the New York State Education Department. A grade level performance checklist will be used to determine attainment of this goal.
- Goal #3: Annually, Global Concepts students will experience incremental gains on all required New York State Assessments, starting from the baseline data. This will enable Global Concepts to reach its goal of maintaining an achievement level of 80 to 90% of the total population of students being proficient (levels 3 or 4) on all NYS Assessments. In addition, Global Concepts will strive for 100% of students attaining a score of levels 3 or 4 on all NYS assessments.
- Goal #4: By the end of the 8th grade, students at Global Concepts will meet the requirements for units of study as described in Commissioner’s Regulation 100.2.

The school has met or made significant progress toward meeting each of these goals. With respect to Goal #3, the school achieved the following results on the NYS assessments in comparison to the sending districts from which the school draws the most students, Lackawanna City School District (58% of its students) and Buffalo Public Schools (34% of its students) and the state.

Percentage of Students Scoring at Levels 3 and 4 on the NYS Assessments in Grades 3 through 8

School/District	Subject	2008-2009²	2009-2010³	2010-2011
Global Concepts Charter School	ELA	78%	56%	51%
Lackawanna CSD	ELA	61%	34%	34%
Buffalo Public Schools	ELA	54%	28%	27%
State - ELA	ELA	77%	53%	53%
Global Concepts Charter School	Math	92%	75%	72%
Lackawanna CSD	Math	78%	40%	44%
Buffalo Public Schools	Math	63%	30%	31%
State – Math	Math	86%	61%	63%

Over the past three years, in English language arts, Global Concepts students have scored at Level 3 and 4 on the NYS assessments in Grades 3 through 8 at higher percentages than Lackawanna CSD and Buffalo Public Schools students and at similar percentages to students in the state each year. During the same time period, in mathematics, Global Concepts students have scored at Level 3 and 4 on the NYS assessments in Grades 3 through 8 at higher percentages than Lackawanna, Buffalo, and the state each year.

² In 2008-09, the scores for Global Concepts represents the students the school was serving and who were tested in grades 3 – 7. (The school expanded to grade 8 in 2009-10).

³ All NYS Assessment cut scores were recalibrated between the 2008-09 and 2009-10 tests.

In November, 2011, under New York State's current Differentiated Accountability System, Global Concepts was newly identified for Improvement (year 1) Basic status for failure to meet Adequate Yearly Progress for its Limited English Proficient subgroup of students in English language arts in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, though preliminary information indicating this designation was provided earlier in the summer. The school actually made the test performance target for this subgroup in 2009-2010 in ELA, however the school missed the participation target in that year. The school is currently determining whether it may have made errors in reporting the status of certain students who may not have been required to take the NYS ELA assessments in 2009-2010 due to their recent arrival to the U.S. which may have resulted in missing the participation target

A Department team visited Global Concepts for a renewal site visit on October 11 and 12, 2011, and assessed the school's response to this designation as part of the team's review of evidence. The team found that the school has proactively implemented key strategies to address the academic achievement of its English language learners. In June, 2011, the school received its preliminary 2011 NYS assessment results and determined that the progress for the English language learner subgroup in English language arts was not satisfactory. The school identified and addressed this issue proactively, and on the recommendations of teachers, four specialized teachers were hired to support the achievement of English language learners. The school reconfigured the deployment of support staff as well. The school restructured its English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum, added an additional ESL teacher and more closely integrated the work of ESL staff with other instructors. Students spend three periods with ESL teachers, then one ESL teacher works with two content area teachers to identify and address student needs. ESL teachers attend all teacher grade level and subject area meetings.

Additional findings about the school's educational program made by the Department team during its October 2011 renewal site visit related to educational success included the following:

- The school's mission is evident and "lives" across the school and in classrooms. Academic achievement is valued and supported. Diversity is recognized and celebrated through ongoing school-wide and classroom level initiatives to educate students about other cultures.
- The school has in place a system of continuous improvement and extension of the academic program, and has made changes to its curriculum to better align with new Common Core standards.
- The use of data is institutionalized and productive. The school utilizes a variety of assessment measures to evaluate student progress on an ongoing basis.
- There is strong evidence that the focus of the entire school is on student needs and college preparation.
- There is strong evidence that the school environment is orderly and respectful. The renewal site visit team observed a spirit of collaboration and open communication throughout the school.
- There is strong evidence that instructional practice is consistently and effectively delivered. The use of data is institutionalized and productive. The renewal site visit team observed effective teaching practices in use in classrooms.

Organizational and Fiscal Soundness

The Department team that visited Global Concepts for a renewal site visit in October 2011 made findings about the school's organizational capacity that included the following:

- The school's organizational structure is strong and collaborative. The school leaders have been empowered by the Board and CEO to focus exclusively on academic achievement. The professional development plan is driven by data.
- Active engagement and understanding of all school priorities varies across members of the Board. The Board has taken an approach to empowerment that encompasses the entire school community. The Board has moved to a more strategic approach to planning this year.
- The school has had, and continues, long range planning that is effective and appropriate. The school conducts ongoing review of student achievement data and the information is used by teachers, administrators and board members to identify strategies to make the program more effective.
- The school communicates with parents in a variety of ways. Relationships between the school and community organizations for the purpose of internships, community service, and apprenticeships are all in place.
- Parents and students are satisfied with the academic and support systems provided by the school.
- There is considerable evidence of a safe environment throughout the school. The facility is attractive and suited to its purpose.

The Department reviewed audited financial statements for the school for the prior five operating years 2006-2007 through 2010-2011. The school maintained a positive change in net assets each year with a net asset balance of \$5,196,273 at June 30, 2011. Cash flow ending balances for all years were positive. Comparison of prior year budgets to actual revenue and expenses were only available for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Revenues were underestimated but this was due to the state's temporary freeze on funding increases. Overall, for both the budget and actual comparison, the school maintained a surplus. The reports on Internal Control over Financial Reporting issued with the annual independent audit during this same time period found no instances of non-compliance with governmental auditing standards. The school had a compliance audit performed in accordance with OMB Circular A-133 in their initial charter term in the 2005-2006 fiscal year and no instances of non-compliance were issued. The school was not issued a CPA management letter for the previous five years, indicating no issues of note found by the independent auditor in the course of conducting the audit.

The school's board of trustees has a process in place to provide fiscal oversight. The board has a finance committee, which meets monthly to review budget projections, purchases over \$1,000 and the bidding process. The overall Board is involved in strategic planning for long-term items. The Board of Trustees has hired an independent certified auditor each fiscal year to perform the annual audit. The reports are submitted to the NYSED along with other required federal and state fiscal reporting.

Plans for the Next Charter Period

Global Concepts proposes to complete its expansion to a full K-12 program during the next charter term. In order to adjust to provide for this expansion, the school has established a Chief Executive Officer position that is distinct from the Principal position, and will also reorganize other administrative staff to ensure that operational, student support, special education, and instructional oversight functions are adequately supported. As part of the Renewal Application, the school also provided additional documentation about a staffing expansion plan as well as curricular documents for the full high school program.

The school also presented a budget through the 2015-2016 school year, the end of the proposed renewal charter term. For this period, the budgeted amounts were consistent in the amount of per pupil total revenue estimated, indicating that revenue is consistent with enrollment; total per pupil revenue remained at \$12,088 for five years. The school budgeted on a conservative basis anticipating no increase in the per pupil rate. Expenses did increase each year with an anticipated increase of \$1,000 per pupil by the end of the renewal period in 2015-2016 from the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This anticipated increase in per pupil expense will cause the school to have a decrease in net assets for the last two budget periods of \$29,476 and \$810,339 respectively but total net assets remained positive at \$5,956,479 for the last renewal period 2015-2016. The cash flow projections for the five year budgets were positive except for the last budget period. The major reason for the increase in expenses in the five year period was salaries and fringe benefits projections.

Student Demographics

	2008-2009 ⁴		2009-2010 ⁵		2010-2011 ⁶	
	Percent of Charter Enrollment	Percent of Lackawanna CSD Enrollment	Percent of Charter Enrollment	Percent of Lackawanna CSD Enrollment	Percent of Charter Enrollment	Percent of Lackawanna CSD Enrollment
Race/Ethnic Origin						
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	1	Not yet available	Not yet available
Black or African American	23	20	20	19		
Hispanic or Latino	9	9	8	9		
Asian or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	1	1	0		
White	65	71	68	71		
Multiracial	1	0	3	0		
Special Populations						
Eligible for Free Lunch	59	64	57	64	57	Not yet available
Eligible for Reduced-Price Lunch	13	16	11	15	11	
Limited English Proficient ⁷	13	5	13	6	13	
Students with Disabilities	11	17	9	18	8	

⁴ Source: Department School Report Card and the Basic Education Data System (BEDS) and Special Education School District Data Profile.

⁵ Source: Department School Report Card, Basic Education Data System (BEDS), and Special Education School District Data Profile.

⁶ The information for 2010-2011 for the charter school was by the charter school. District data is not yet available.

⁷ The school reports that the Limited English Proficient information on its School Report card for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 was reported by staff inaccurately, and the data presented here is based on updated information provided by the school as part of its Renewal Application materials.

Current Board of Trustees as presented in the Renewal Application

Name	Position on The Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Area of expertise, and/or additional role	Term information
Dawan Jones	Chairman	Finance, Personnel And Progress	Law enforcement	4th term – 3 yrs 2010-2013
Antonio Estrada	Vice-Chair	Finance	Social Services and a Parent	4th term -3 yrs 2009-2012
William Kruger	Secretary	Personnel	Technology and a Parent	2nd term – 3 yrs 2009-2012
Idreas Ahmed	Trustee	NA	Community Liaison and Parent	4th term – 3 yrs 2010-2013
Suzana Mazella	Treasurer	Finance	Medical Insurance Reimbursement	4th term – 3 yrs 2009-2012
Kelly Asher	Trustee	NA	Social Services	1st term – 3yrs 2009-2012
Anthony DeMarco	Trustee	Personnel	Education	1st term – 3 y