



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 Charter Authorized by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) – Opportunity Charter School
DATE: May 30, 2012

AUTHORIZATION(S):

John B. King Jr.
SUMMARY

I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the proposed third renewal charter for Opportunity Charter School as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in his capacity as a charter school authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law, and that the charter be extended for the term indicated.

Name of Charter School	Opportunity Charter School
District of Location	NYC, CSD #3
Facilities	The School is co-located at 240 W. 113 th Street with two other schools, P.S. 241 and Harlem Success Academy 4 Charter School.
Terms and Date of Charter	Initial Charter: May 18, 2004 to May 17, 2009 First Renewal: May 18, 2009 to August 18, 2010 Second Renewal: August 19, 2010 to June 30, 2012
Current Grade(s) and Approved Enrollment	2011-2012: Grades 6-12 with 420 students
Current Year of Operation	2011-2012: 8 th year of operation
Lead Applicant(s)	Joseph Merlino and Philip Pallone (BoT Co-Chairs)
Management Company	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
New Material Term	Third Renewal Charter: July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2017

The Chancellor of the NYCDOE provided the following information about the proposed renewal of the charter for Opportunity Charter School:

Opportunity Charter School (OCS) is a New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) authorized charter school currently serving 429 students in grades six through twelve in NYC community school district three. OCS was originally chartered on May 18, 2004 for five years. OCS was granted its first renewal charter on May 18, 2009 for a period of one year and three months and then a second renewal charter on August 19th, 2010 set to expire on June 30th, 2012.

The NYCDOE Charter Schools Office (CSO) conducted an extensive renewal review process consisting of a thorough review of the school's Retrospective and Prospective renewal application and annual reporting documents, as well as a detailed audit of the school's finances, operations and governance practices. In addition, the CSO conducted a detailed site visit on November 2nd and 3rd 2012. On November 21st, the CSO held a public hearing regarding the renewal of OCS.

On January 9th, 2012 the CSO published an initial renewal report. In that report, the CSO stated OCS had met the majority of its goals as delineated in its Performance Plan (December 2010) that was a condition of its previous renewal. However, due to concerns regarding OCS's academic performance as evidenced by low proficiency rates on New York state tests as well as a lack of rigorous instruction observed during visits to the school, the CSO recommended a short-term renewal of two years.

After continued review and planning internally, with other divisions within NYCDOE and with OCS leadership, the CSO has determined that in order to set highly rigorous academic and operational targets as well as provide sufficient time for OCS to effectively implement programmatic changes to meet these targets, OCS should be granted a five-year renewal term.

The revised five-year charter agreement contains more rigorous academic and operational goals for OCS than the previous two year draft:

- For the Middle School, we have increased targets for students' academic progress on state ELA and Math exams.*
- For the High School, we have increased targets for students' academic performance on English and Math Regents exams as well as graduation rates. Additionally, we have set more rigorous post-secondary readiness goals including college readiness and enrollment.*
- Across all grades, we have set differentiated goals in years three and four of the renewal term to promote increased rigor over time.*

The NYCDOE Renewal Report for Opportunity Charter School, which provides more detail about the school, including performance data, and the performance plan for the charter renewal term, is available on the NYCDOE's website at:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8BC857FF-74F9-4CC3-84D3-BCF4E192C876/117759/OCSReport2012FINAL.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 third renewal charter of the Opportunity 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, 2017.

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