



TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Initial Applications and Charters
Authorized by the Board of Regents
DATE: June 4, 2012

AUTHORIZATION(S):

John B. Slentz
SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

The Commissioner and Department staff recommend that the Board of Regents issue the initial charters and provisional charters for the following three Charter Schools:

1. Brilla College Preparatory Charter School
2. Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
3. South Bronx Classical Charter School II

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute, Article 56, the NYS Charter Schools Act.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for action at its June 2012 meeting.

Background Information

The Commissioner and Department staff recommends that the Board of Regents issue the initial charters and provisional charters for the following three Charter Schools:

1. Brilla College Preparatory Charter School
2. Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
3. South Bronx Classical Charter School II

Together, these three charter schools will add over 1700 high quality public K-12 seats for families in New York City. The following tables outline information about each

of these three proposed charter schools. Additional details about each of the applications and the review of those applications is included in the attached Summary, Findings and Recommendation for each proposed school (Attachment A) which are also posted on the Regents Web page at: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/>

Name of Charter School	Brilla College Preparatory Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Richard Ramirez
District of Location	Bronx, CSD 7
Opening Date	Summer/Fall 2013
Projected Charter Term	September, 2013- June 30, 2018
Management Company	None
Partners	None
Facility	Proposed lease with private landlord
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 196 students in grades K through 1 in 2013-14, growing to 532 students in grades K through 5 in 2017-18.
Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	742 students in grades K through 8
Mission Statement	<i>“Brilla College Preparatory Charter School, a K-8 school in the classical tradition, helps students to grow intellectually, socially, and physically into young men and women of good character and spirit, and to be prepared for excellence in high school, college and beyond.”</i>

Name of Charter School	Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Sara Berman and William Allen
District of Location	Manhattan, CSD 3
Opening Date	August 26, 2013
Projected Charter Term	June 19, 2012 through June 30, 2018
Management Company	None
Partners	Hebrew Charter School Center
Facilities	Proposed lease with private landlord
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 156 students in grades K though 1 in 2013-14, growing to 446 students (78 students per grade) in grades K though 5 in 2017-18.
Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	468 students in grades K through 5
Mission Statement	<i>“Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School will provide its students with the academic and personal foundation necessary to successfully pursue advanced studies and achieve continued personal growth as ethical and informed global citizens. In order to accomplish this, Harlem Hebrew will offer an academically rigorous K-5 curriculum which includes intensive instruction in the Hebrew language. Students in a diverse student body will also develop a strong sense of social and civic responsibility through the integration of service learning and community service across the curriculum.”</i>

Name of Charter School	South Bronx Classical Charter School II
Lead Applicant(s)	Lester Long
District of Location	Bronx, CSD 12, 8, 9, 7, 11
Opening Date	Summer/Fall 2013
Projected Charter Term	September 2013- June 30, 2018
Management Company	NA
Partners	South Bronx Classical Charter School
Facility	Seeking private space or public co-location
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 120 students in grades K through 1 in 2013-14, growing to 360 students in grades K through 5 in 2017-2018.
Maximum Enrollment and Grade Span	540 students in grades K through 8
Mission Statement	<i>“South Bronx Classical Charter School II prepares K-8th grade students in the South Bronx to excel in college preparatory high schools. Through a classical curriculum and highly-structured setting, students become liberated scholars and citizens of impeccable character who achieve proficiency in and advanced mastery of New York State Performance Standards.”</i>

Chapter 101 of the Laws of 2010 increased the cap on the number of charters that can be issued in New York State, from 200 to 460. The statute also designates the Board of Regents and the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (SUNY) as the authorizers for the additional 260 charters (130 charters to be issued by each) and requires that the two chartering entities create competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) processes for applications for the additional 260 charters. The two Boards are required to issue RFPs for new charter applications in cycles on August 1, 2010, January 1, 2011, January 1, 2012 and September 1, 2013.

The Board of Regents application and review process is designed to award charters to applicants that demonstrate the greatest probability of creating high quality public schools. The charter school application process was revised in the summer of 2010 to align with the criteria that is outlined in Chapter 101 of the Laws of 2010. The Department’s first RFP was issued on August 1, 2010 and resulted in the issuance of seven initial charters for new Regents-authorized charter schools in December 2010. The Department’s second RFP was issued on January 1, 2011 as required by the statute and resulted in the issuance of nine initial charters. Of the sixteen charters that were issued by the Board of Regents pursuant to the RFP process in 2010 and 2011, twelve new charter schools are located in New York City and the remaining four are in the Rochester and Mount Vernon districts.

The application and review process consists of multiple phases in which applicants are invited to advance on the basis of the successful evaluation of each submission. The *2012 Request for Proposals to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents* outlines two rounds of review. The recommendations from the first round of review are being presented today. The steps in the review process include:

- Submission and review of a Letter of Intent providing a brief description of the school mission and design; the proposed student population (including plans to meet enrollment and retention goals for target populations); initial evidence of community outreach efforts and community support; a proposed location and/or proposed facility; information about the founding group and anticipated members of the initial board of trustees. Thirty Letters of Intent were submitted to the Charter School Office by January 17, 2012. Of the 30 Letters received, 20 applicants were invited to submit full applications and 10 were not accepted because they did not meet submission requirements.
- Submission and review of a written Full Application providing the full design of the proposed school, including instructional model and approach, targeted student population, organizational structure and financial plan. The Full Application is structured to objectively evaluate the proposed school's educational alignment and operational compliance to the requirements and educational priorities of the Charter School Act. Fourteen Applications were submitted. One Application was not accepted because it was incomplete. Thirteen Applications were accepted for review. Each accepted Application was rigorously evaluated by a five-member expert panel, each of which included qualified consultants, volunteer peer reviewers who are current active educators in public schools or universities, and experienced Department staff.
- Review of public comment provided through formal public hearings (required to be conducted by the school district of location for the proposed school) and through direct oral and written communication with the Associate Commissioner of the Office for Innovative Schools.
- Capacity interviews with founding groups to discuss application details and to evaluate the skill and knowledge of the initial board of trustees to launch and operate the proposed school.
- Recommendations are made to the Board of Regents by the Commissioner to award new charters to applicant groups with the strongest plan and presentation to launch and operate a highly effective public school. These recommendations are based on a synthesis of information gathered throughout all stages of the process.

The Department found the remaining ten applications to be fundamentally lacking in the presentation of a complete, comprehensive and viable school design plan. After Department staff communicated with lead applicants about the broad areas of concern that were identified by the Department and review panelists, the ten applicants not being recommended for chartering chose to withdraw the Full Application from further consideration during this first round of review.

A second round of application submission and review during 2012 will begin with the submission of Letters of Intent by June 25, 2012, with recommendations expected to be brought to the Board of Regents for action at the regularly-scheduled December 2012 meeting.

Recommendation

The proposed charter schools: (1) meet 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) are 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.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the Brilla College Preparatory Charter School for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the Harlem Hebrew Language Academy Charter School for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves and issues a charter and provisional charter to the South Bronx Classical Charter School II for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for these charter schools is effective immediately.