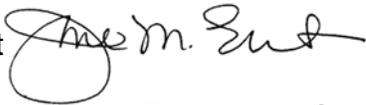




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** Jhone M. Ebert 

**SUBJECT:** Charter Schools: Merger Revision to Charters  
Authorized by the Chancellor of the New York  
City Department of Education (NYCDOE)

**DATE:** February 16, 2016

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

## SUMMARY

### Issues for Decision

- I. Should the Board of Regents approve the merger of Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School, Achievement First East New York Charter School, and Achievement First Endeavor Charter School (education corporations authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE) into Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools (an Education Corporation authorized by the SUNY Board of Trustees to operate nine schools), with Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools as the surviving education corporation?

AND

- II. Should the Board of Regents approve the merger of Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School (an education corporation authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE) into Uncommon New York City Charter Schools (an Education Corporation authorized by the SUNY Board of Trustees to operate eleven schools), with Uncommon New York City Charter Schools as the surviving education corporation?

### Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by New York State law.

## **Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the February 2016 Regents meeting.

## **Procedural History**

The May 2010 amendments to Education Law §2853(1)(b-1) eliminated language that prohibited education corporations in New York from operating more than one charter school, and now allows charter schools and the families they serve to realize the many potential benefits of governance and operational merger.

## **Background Information**

The merger of existing charter school governing boards requires revisions to each of the charters of the merging schools, which must be approved by the respective chartering entity or entities involved. This means that, in situations where schools that wish to merge have different chartering entities (“cross-entity merger”), the approval of all parties – the boards of trustees of the schools and each chartering entity – is required before any such merger may occur.

I forward the merger recommendations for the following charter schools, as proposed by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE in her capacity as a charter school authorizer under Article 56 of the Education Law.

### **I. ACHIEVEMENT FIRST BROOKLYN CHARTER SCHOOLS MERGER**

The merger would have the following effect:

- A.** Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School (NYCDOE),
- B.** Achievement First East New York Charter School (NYCDOE), and
- C.** Achievement First Endeavor Charter School (NYCDOE)

will merge into Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools (SUNY), which currently operates:

Achievement First-Bushwick Charter School,  
Achievement First Linden Charter School,  
Achievement First Charter School 10,  
Achievement First Charter School 11,  
Achievement First Charter School 12,  
Achievement First Brownsville Charter School,  
Achievement First North Brooklyn Preparatory Charter School,  
Achievement First Apollo Charter School, and  
Achievement First Aspire Charter School

This action would also terminate the existence of Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School, Achievement First East New York Charter School, and Achievement First Endeavor Charter School as separate education corporations, bring each education corporation under the authorization of the SUNY Board of Trustees, and authorize Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools to operate twelve charter schools in the Achievement First portfolio.

### **Summary of Public Comment**

The New York City Department of Education has approved of the proposed merger with an effective date of April 1, 2016, and held the required public hearings regarding the proposed charter revision and merger December 10, 2015. There were fourteen attendees and six speakers in support of the revision. The NYCDOE has provided a summary for each school, as set forth below.

**I.A. Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School**

Board Chair(s)	Deborah Shanley
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Achievement First
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 17
Physical Address(es)	790 East New York Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11203 (K-8) 1485 Pacific Street, Brooklyn , NY 11216 (9-12)
Facility Owner(s) <sup>2</sup>	DOE & Charter Partnership Building
Enrollment <sup>3</sup>	1038
Grades Served	K-12
School Opened For Instruction	2005-2006
Current Charter Term	March 15, 2015 to June 30, 2018
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	966
<b>Revision Requested</b>	<b>Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School is requesting to merge with Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools to be authorized by SUNY.</b>
Revision Recommendation	Approve
Timetable for Revision Implementation	The Regents action for the Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School would take effect on April 1, 2016.

Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School (AF Crown Heights) was first authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE as a charter school for the 2005-06 school year. AF Crown Heights is a K-12 school located in NYC Community School District 17. The school is sited in two buildings. In K391, they are co-located with New Heights Middle School. In K434, they are co-located with Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School, Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant, and Kings Collegiate Charter School.<sup>1</sup> The School is in the third charter term and was issued a short term, three and a half year renewal in February 2015. The School is currently serving 1038 students in Grades K-12 in the 2015-16 school year. The School is operating above authorized scale, which is 966.

<sup>1</sup> According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Managements System

Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School submitted the following rationale for the requested merger in the Letter of Intent:

The benefits of the proposed merger will impact students, families, staff, governance, school finances and operations. The primary benefits include, but are not limited to:

**Shared Educational Programming and Resources.** The merger will allow educational resources, including programs, services and staff, to be shared by the merged. Specialized programming (e.g., enhanced special education programming, tutoring services, and enrichment courses) may be offered to students attending any of the Schools at a common location. Certain special education settings, including 12-1-1 classrooms, are infeasible within a single charter as finding scholars of similar ages and similar needs in a facility that has space can be challenging. The merger will allow transfers between the Schools so that additional special education settings can be made available to scholars. In addition, AF Brooklyn will be able to hire full-time staff to provide certain services, rather than each School employing part-time staff who share hours between the school or the Achievement First network employing the staff member.

**Continuity and Connection For Scholars Who Move Homes.** Like many urban populations, the families served by the Schools are highly mobile. The increased flexibility to transfer between schools would allow families the possibility of transferring to another Achievement First school in the event of a family move, safety concerns, travel hardship, or other relevant reasons. We believe this would both reduce student attrition and improve family engagement.

**Simplified and Streamlined Governance Structure.** Upon completion of the merger, there will exist only one Board of Trustees (with representatives from each School serving on such Board), which will be responsible for the oversight and strategic direction of the entire education corporation. The consolidated Board of Trustees will be in a better position to understand and make strategic decisions that apply to all of the Schools and the Achievement First network, while still having the ability to focus on the oversight of each individual School.

**Operations and Finance Efficiencies.** The merger would create efficiencies in operations and finance, which ultimately translates into more resources of teaching and learning (both in terms of dollars and staff time). Contracting, procurement, and insurance would all be streamlined with a single legal entity, with the savings reinvested to support the academic program. Additionally, the merged entity has been able to build up board-designated cash reserves that benefit all schools with the merged entity. Although the merger would not change the budgeting model and financial targets, it would ensure that cash flow is sufficient without the use of a line of credit, which would save on financing costs and make overall financial management more efficient.

### Overall Proficiency

	ELA					Mathematics				
	AFCH	CSD 17	Variance <sup>2</sup>	NYC	Variance	AFCH	CSD 17	Variance	NYC	Variance
<b>2014-2015:</b>	26%	22%	+4%	30%	-4%	46%	24%	+22%	35%	+11%

*Note: This 2015 proficiency data comes from the previous charter term; the school has not yet taken state assessments in its current charter term.*

### Enrollment

	2014-2015				
	AFCH	CSD 17	Variance to CSD 17	NYC	Variance to NYC
Economically Disadvantaged	73%	85%	-12%	78%	-5%
Limited English Proficient <sup>3</sup>	0%	9%	-9%	13%	-13%
Students with Disabilities <sup>4</sup>	12%	16%	-4%	18%	-6%

*Note: This 2015 enrollment data comes from the previous charter term; 15-16 enrollment rates are not currently accurately available.*

The school partners with the Achievement First recruitment team to carry out a comprehensive recruitment strategy consisting of direct outreach, information sessions, school-based open houses, presentations at community based organizations, targeted mailings, and both online and outdoor advertising. These techniques have been successful in generating applications and in sharing the opportunity to apply with low-income families

- The AF student recruitment team is bilingual and has made extensive efforts to reach out to families who speak languages other than English. All outdoor signs are in both English and Spanish, as are all brochures and other marketing materials, including the Achievement First website page for student enrollment. Spanish-speaking members of the recruitment team have presented in Spanish

<sup>2</sup> Variance is defined as the percent difference of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and district of location.

<sup>3</sup> Includes ELL students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

<sup>4</sup> Includes SWD students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

at Head Start and community organizations (e.g., The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and Nueva Vida Daycare Center), and multiple members of the parent-led “street teams” that recruited directly in the community were Spanish speakers.

- The school’s lottery uses a weighted preference for English Language Learners.
- Efforts to recruit students with disabilities have focused primarily on making clear in promotional materials and presentations that the Achievement First is highly effective for special education students, and that the school offer services in accordance with IEPs.
- AF’s recruitment team reaches out annually to day care centers that are identified by the NYC Department of Education as serving students with disabilities.
- The AF student recruitment team has partnered with the network special services team to ensure that marketing materials capture the range of services available.
- AF has reached out specifically to community organizations that serve at risk families with social and health services.
- The lottery uses a weighted preference for students with disabilities.

**I.B. Achievement First East New York Charter School**

Board Chair(s)	Deborah Shanley
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Achievement First
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School Districts 19 (Grades K-8), 32 (Grades 9-11)
Physical Address(es)	557 Pennsylvania Avenue, Brooklyn , NY 11207 (K-4) 158 Richmond Street, Brooklyn , NY 11208 (5-8) 35 Starr Street, Brooklyn, NY 11221 (9-11)
Facility Owner(s)	DOE & Charter Partnership Building
Enrollment <sup>5</sup>	869
Grades Served	K-11
School Opened For Instruction	2005-2006
Current Charter Term	March 15, 2015 to June 30, 2019
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	1,064
<b>Revision Requested</b>	<b>Achievement First East New York Charter School is requesting to merge with AF Brooklyn Charter Schools to be authorized by SUNY.</b>
Revision Recommendation	Approve
Timetable for Revision Implementation	The Regents action for the Achievement First East New York Charter School would take effect on April 1, 2016.

Achievement First East New York Charter School (AF East New York) was first authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE as a charter school for the 2005-06 school year. AF East New York is a K-11 school with grades K-8 located in Community School District 19 and grades 9-12 located in Community School District 32 in Brooklyn. The school is sited in three buildings. In K013, which houses grades

<sup>5</sup> According to ATS data as of October 14, 2015

K-4, they are co-located with P.S.13. In K065, they are not co-located with another district school, though they are located in district space. In K111, which houses grades 9-12, they are co-located with I.S. 347 and I.S. 349<sup>6</sup>. The School is in the third charter term and was issued a full term renewal in February 2015. The School is currently serving 869 students in Grades K-11 in the 2015-16 school year. The School is operating below their authorized enrollment, which is 1064<sup>7</sup>.

### Overall Proficiency

	ELA					Mathematics				
	AFENY	CSD 19	Variance to CSD 19 <sup>8</sup>	NYC	Variance to NYC	AFENY	CSD 19	Variance to CSD 19	NYC	Variance to NYC
<b>2014-2015:</b>	34%	16%	+18%	30%	+4%	50%	18%	+32%	19%	+31%

*Note: This 2015 proficiency data comes from the previous charter term; the school has not yet taken state assessments in its current charter term.*

### Enrollment

	2014-2015				
	AFENY	CSD 19	Variance to CSD 19	NYC	Variance to NYC
Economically Disadvantaged	84%	88%	-4%	78%	+6%
Limited English Proficient <sup>9</sup>	1%	11%	-10%	13%	-12%
Students with Disabilities <sup>10</sup>	12%	18%	-6%	18%	-6%

*Note: This 2015 enrollment data comes from the previous charter term; 15-16 enrollment rates are not currently accurately available.*

- The school partners with the Achievement First recruitment team to carry out a comprehensive recruitment strategy consisting of direct outreach, information

<sup>6</sup> According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Managements System.

<sup>7</sup> The school has not yet reached its maximum grade capacity.

<sup>8</sup> Variance is defined as the percent difference of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and district of location.

<sup>9</sup> Includes ELL students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

<sup>10</sup> Includes SWD students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

sessions, school-based open houses, presentations at community based organizations, targeted mailings, and both online and outdoor advertising. These techniques have been successful in generating applications and in sharing the opportunity to apply with low-income families

- The AF student recruitment team is bilingual and has made extensive efforts to reach out to families who speak languages other than English. All outdoor signs are in both English and Spanish, as are all brochures and other marketing materials, including the Achievement First website page for student enrollment. Spanish-speaking members of the recruitment team have presented in Spanish at Head Start and community organizations (e.g., The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and Nueva Vida Daycare Center), and multiple members of the parent-led “street teams” that recruited directly in the community were Spanish speakers.
- The school’s lottery uses a weighted preference for English Language Learners.
- Efforts to recruit students with disabilities have focused primarily on making clear in promotional materials and presentations that the Achievement First is highly effective for special education students, and that the school offer services in accordance with IEPs.
- AF’s recruitment team reaches out annually to day care centers that are identified by the NYC Department of Education as serving students with disabilities.
- The AF student recruitment team has partnered with the network special services team to ensure that marketing materials capture the range of services available.
- AF has reached out specifically to community organizations that serve at risk families with social and health services.
- The lottery uses a weighted preference for students with disabilities.

### **I.C. Achievement First Endeavor Charter School**

Board Chair(s)	Deborah Shanley
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Achievement First
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School Districts 13 (Grades K-8), 17 (Grades 9-12)
Physical Address(es)	510 Waverly Avenue, Brooklyn , NY 11238 (K-8) 1485 Pacific Street, Brooklyn , NY 11216 (9-12)
Facility Owner(s)	Charter Partnership Building
Enrollment <sup>11</sup>	1009
Grades Served	K-12
School Opened For Instruction	2006-2007
Current Charter Term	July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020
Current Authorized Grade Span	K-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	997
<b>Revision Requested</b>	<b>Achievement First Endeavor Charter School is requesting to merge with Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools to be authorized by SUNY.</b>
Revision Recommendation	Approve
Timetable for Revision Implementation	The Regents action for Achievement First Endeavor Middle School would take effect April 1, 2016.

Achievement First Endeavor Charter School (AF Endeavor) was first authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE as a charter school for the 2006-07 school year. AF Endeavor is a K-12 school with grades K-8 located in NY Community School District 13 and grades 9-12 located in NY Community School District 17; both districts are located in Brooklyn. The school is sited in two buildings. K784, which houses grades K-8, is located in private space and is not co-located with any district schools. In K434, which houses grades 9-12, is co-located with Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School, Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant, and Kings Collegiate Charter School<sup>12</sup>. The School is in the third charter

<sup>11</sup> According to ATS data as of October 14, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Managements System

term and was issued a full term renewal in June 2015. The School is currently serving 1009 students in Grades K-12 in the 2015-16 school year. The School is operating above authorized scale, which is 997.

Over the course of the charter term, the school performed just below the average of the CSD of location in ELA and above the average performance in math Common Core aligned NYS assessments. The school's Common Core aligned Regents pass rates for English and math exceeded those of the City. The revision sought would not impact student enrollment.

### Overall Proficiency

	ELA					Mathematics				
	AFECS	CSD	Variance to CSD <sup>13</sup>	NYC	Variance to NYC	AFECS	CSD	Variance to CSD	NYC	Variance to NYC
<b>2014-2015:</b>	29%	25%	+4%	30%	-1%	50%	26%	+24%	35%	+15%

*Note: This 2015 proficiency data comes from the previous charter term; the school has not yet taken state assessments in its current charter term.*

### Enrollment

	2014-2015				
	AFENY	CSD	Variance to CSD	NYC	Variance to NYC
Economically Disadvantaged	82%	70%	+12%	78%	+4%
Limited English Proficient <sup>14</sup>	0%	4%	-4%	13%	-13%
Students with Disabilities <sup>15</sup>	13%	13%	0%	18%	-5%

*Note: This 2015 enrollment data comes from the previous charter term; 15-16 enrollment rates are not currently accurately available.*

<sup>13</sup> Variance is defined as the percent difference of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and district of location.

<sup>14</sup> Includes ELL students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

<sup>15</sup> Includes SWD students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

- The school partners with the Achievement First recruitment team to carry out a comprehensive recruitment strategy consisting of direct outreach, information sessions, school-based open houses, presentations at community based organizations, targeted mailings, and both online and outdoor advertising. These techniques have been successful in generating applications and in sharing the opportunity to apply with low-income families
- The AF student recruitment team is bilingual and has made extensive efforts to reach out to families who speak languages other than English. All outdoor signs are in both English and Spanish, as are all brochures and other marketing materials, including the Achievement First website page for student enrollment. Spanish-speaking members of the recruitment team have presented in Spanish at Head Start and community organizations (e.g., The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services and Nueva Vida Daycare Center), and multiple members of the parent-led “street teams” that recruited directly in the community were Spanish speakers.
- The school’s lottery uses a weighted preference for English Language Learners.
- Efforts to recruit students with disabilities have focused primarily on making clear in promotional materials and presentations that the Achievement First is highly effective for special education students, and that the school offer services in accordance with IEPs.
- AF’s recruitment team reaches out annually to day care centers that are identified by the NYC Department of Education as serving students with disabilities.
- The AF student recruitment team has partnered with the network special services team to ensure that marketing materials capture the range of services available.
- AF has reached out specifically to community organizations that serve at risk families with social and health services.
- The lottery uses a weighted preference for students with disabilities.

## **II. UNCOMMON NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS MERGER**

The merger would have the following effect:

### **II.A. Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School (NYCDOE)**

will merge into Uncommon New York City Charter Schools (SUNY), which currently operates

Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School (SUNY)  
Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School (SUNY)  
Brownsville Collegiate Charter School (SUNY)  
Excellence Charter Schools [authorized to operate Excellence Girls Charter School and Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant] (SUNY)  
Kings Collegiate Charter School (SUNY)  
Leadership Preparatory Bedford Stuyvesant Charter School (SUNY)  
Leadership Preparatory Brownsville Charter School (SUNY)  
Leadership Preparatory Ocean Hill Charter School (SUNY)  
Leadership Prep Canarsie (SUNY)  
Ocean Hill Collegiate (SUNY)

This action would also terminate the existence of Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School as a separate education corporation, bring the education corporation under the authorization of the SUNY Board of Trustees, and authorize Uncommon New York City Charter Schools to operate twelve charter schools in the Uncommon NYC portfolio.

### **Summary of Public Comment**

The New York City Department of Education has approved of the proposed merger with an effective date of April 1, 2016, and held the required public hearings regarding the proposed charter revision and merger on February 23, 2015. Three individuals attended the hearing. No comments were made in support. No comments made in opposition.

The NYCDOE has provided a summary for Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School, as set forth below.

## **II.A. Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School**

Board Chair(s)	David Saltzman
Charter Management Organization (if applicable)	Uncommon Schools
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School Districts 14 (Grades 5-8), 17 (Grades 9-12)
Physical Address(es)	157 Wilson Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211 (5-8) 1485 Pacific Street, Brooklyn , NY 11216 (9-12)
Facility Owner(s)	DOE & Charter Partnership Building
Enrollment <sup>16</sup>	538
Grades Served	5-12
School Opened For Instruction	2005-2006
Current Charter Term	July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020
Current Authorized Grade Span	5-12
Current Authorized Enrollment	492
<b>Revision Requested</b>	<b>Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School is requesting to merge with Uncommon Schools to be authorized by SUNY.</b>
Revision Recommendation	Approve
Timetable for Revision Implementation	The Regents action for Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School would take effect on July 1, 2016.

Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School (Williamsburg Collegiate) was first authorized by the Chancellor of the NYCDOE as a charter school for the 2005-06 school year. Williamsburg Collegiate is a 5-12 school with grades 5-8 located in NY Community School District 14 and grades 9-12 located in NY Community School District 17; both districts are located in Brooklyn. The school is sited in two buildings. In K016, which houses grades K-8, they are co-located with P.S. 16. In K434, which houses grades 9-12, they are co-located with Achievement First Brooklyn High School, Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant, and Kings Collegiate

<sup>16</sup> According to ATS data as of October 14, 2015.

Charter School.<sup>17</sup> The School is in the third charter term and was issued a full term renewal in March 2015. The School is currently serving 538 students in Grades 5-12 in the 2015-16 school year. The School is operating above authorized scale, which is 492.

Over the course of the charter term, the school performed above the average of the CSD of location in ELA and math Common Core aligned NYS assessments. The school's Common Core aligned Regents pass rates for English and math exceeded those of the City.

The revision sought would not impact student enrollment.

Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School submitted the following rationale in support of their merger in the Letter of Intent:

### **Flexible Enrollment**

Currently our students are unable to transfer or receive sibling preference between charters. As a merged entity, we will be able to consider student and family preference in school selection including the high school level. This is particularly exciting in high school as it will allow our high schools to specialize and enable us to better tailor our high school offerings to student needs. Students may also have the option to transfer within the Uncommon NYC network for family or other reasons. For example, students with special needs would have the opportunity to transfer to any of our schools that offer the accommodations and support services that meet their individual needs. This could enable Uncommon to create programs that can serve students with more restrictive IEPs, allowing us to serve a broader range of students. The merger will also allow for cross-network sibling preference. Given that many of our schools serve grades 5 and up, this is incredibly helpful for families with students enrolled in those schools who also have elementary-aged children—giving them preference at our elementary schools.

More broadly, Uncommon will be able to have one enrollment and application process for our families which will make it easier for them to decide on the best school for their child. It will also allow Uncommon to run its student recruitment process and admissions lottery centrally, simplifying the process for families and streamlining the work of our school leaders so that they can devote their full attention to daily operational and instructional needs.

### **Program and Staff Enhancements to Support our Schools**

With the merger, our schools will be able to create additional specialized programs and/or gain additional staff across the schools to support high school and/or college placement, additional instructional needs, SPED and ELL students, and parent and community engagement.

---

<sup>17</sup> According to NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Managements System

In fact, for students with disabilities and our English Language Learners, a merger would provide new opportunities for services and accommodations that do not exist at their current school. For example, Uncommon Schools plans to launch a new special education program based at Ocean Hill Collegiate that will serve students with restrictive IEPs in a small classroom – students we are presently unable to serve.

With shared staffing, there can also be more collaboration across schools. This kind of collaboration will encourage our network to further leverage and implement best practices to increase the success of our scholars, teachers, and leaders. This impact of the merger will compliment a network-wide shift in leadership. This fall, Uncommon Schools will have one Chief Schools Officer for grades K –8 and one Chief Schools Officer for grades 9—12 across the network. This approach to leadership will allow our schools to share and align more than ever before and promote best practices for teaching and leading our scholars. It encourages a new level of collaboration across our network, as will the merged structure of our New York City schools.

Finally, with more operational efficiency and shared program structures, Uncommon will have increased capacity to consider overall strategic initiatives that can make our schools stronger and push our students to higher levels of achievement. The merger will allow for creative space to experiment with new approaches and expanded opportunities for serving students or improvements to the way we serve our students now. For example, this could create capacity to consider launching a Pre-K program, expanding our after school offerings, increasing the amount of technology our students are exposed to in the classroom, or specializing our high school programs – to name a few.

### **Streamlined Operations and Stronger Oversight**

The merger will also drastically reduce operations burdens for school operators and the network team. Currently, the network team executes several iterations of charter revisions and governance requests across all 21 schools. In addition, our school operations leaders spend a great deal of time managing mandated reports and data requests. With the merged structure, we anticipate that the time spent on such projects will diminish greatly, allowing us to process such necessary requests in simpler, more centralized and efficient ways (i.e. process fewer charter revisions by being able to consolidate repeated information).

There will also be a more streamlined budget process for our schools. As a merged entity, we will be able to take advantage of economies of scale in procuring resources for our students and teachers. Additionally, our schools will more easily be able to share resources, staff members, and cross subsidize programs if necessary.

A single board overseeing our merged entity will also help improve school governance. The single board will have a better picture of our schools' health. (e.g., one finance committee will look at all schools' budgets and audits). The schools can undergo one centralized audit process and file compliance reporting documents which not only frees up considerable time and resources at the school level, but allows the Board to

accurately and easily see areas of strength and any areas where resources should be allocated.

### Overall Proficiency

	ELA					Mathematics				
	WCCS	CSD	Variance to CSD <sup>[1]</sup>	NYC	Variance to NYC	WCCS	CSD	Variance to CSD	NYC	Variance to NYC
<b>2014-2015:</b>	31%	25%	+6%	30%	+1%	54%	23%	+31%	33%	+21%

*Note: This 2015 proficiency data comes from the previous charter term; the school has not yet taken state assessments in its current charter term.*

### Enrollment

	2014-2015				
	WCCS	CSD	Variance to CSD	NYC	Variance to NYC
Economically Disadvantaged	80%	87%	-7%	78%	+2%
Limited English Proficient <sup>[2]</sup>	4%	11%	-7%	13%	-9%
Students with Disabilities <sup>[3]</sup>	14%	19%	-5%	18%	-4%

*Note: This 2015 enrollment data comes from the previous charter term; 15-16 enrollment rates are not currently accurately available.*

<sup>[1]</sup> Variance is defined as the percent difference of subgroup enrollment between the charter school and district of location.

<sup>[2]</sup> Includes ELL students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

<sup>[3]</sup> Includes SWD students exited from a program within the last three years of the reporting period.

- The school participates in the Uncommon Schools combined application that allows a families to apply to multiple Uncommon Schools at the same time
- The New York City Department of Education provides lists of students by current grade and zip code to Vanguard Direct, Inc. Uncommon Schools will choose the zip codes near our schools that have the highest number of FRPL and ELL students and then will partner with Vanguard to send a mailing to those families. The final list will include close to 20,000 families of rising Kindergarten or 5th grade students. The mailing will include an application in English and Spanish as well as our brochure and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to limit the barrier to return the completed application.
- Uncommon Schools will continue to run both English and Spanish language ads in the New York City Housing Authority Journal. It will also be distributed to more than 10,000 NYCHA employees, and mailed to elected officials and community leaders.
- Uncommon Schools will continue to run both English and Spanish language ads in the Brooklyn Family Magazine and El Diario.
- Uncommon Schools will continue to run advertisements for enrollment on buses with strategic routes throughout the CSDs we serve in Brooklyn.
- In order to reach a wider range of potential applicants, the school has invested in turnstile advertisements at strategic subway stops like Broadway Junction and selected other highly trafficked subway stops.
- The school will continue to reach out to schools in our CSD, and talk about the supports they offer students.
- The school will ask if they have any referrals for students that would benefit from our programmatic support.
- The school will continue to build strong connections with the Committee on Special Education and will also ensure they know are an option for students, should they wish to recommend students to join us.
- The school will reach out to related service agencies and will ask if they have any clients they could recommend to apply.
- The school will ensure that all our outreach and application materials clearly state that all students, including those with disabilities, are eligible to apply.
- The school's admissions brochure will continue to explicitly mention our high quality intervention programs that our schools offer of tutoring and small group instruction.
- The school's admissions office and school based staff will continue to be so they are able to answer the questions of potential applicants with special needs.
- The school has created a Special Education Services brochure at Uncommon Schools, providing families with information about the school's support services.
- The school has created two community canvassing walks where school staff will visit local stores, organizations, and apartment buildings and hang flyers and leave brochures and applications in English and in Spanish at each location.

- The school continues to translate all outreach materials that are distributed to families.
- The school will continue to meet with the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, a non-profit referral service which helps Hispanic families find daycares, schools and enrichment programs for their students, to ensure that they are aware of the school for an option for their families.
- A Spanish speaking staff member will continue to be available at our admissions office by phone and email 40 hours a week.
- The school will continue to take advantage of the DOE's Over-the-phone Interpretation Services.
- Uncommon Schools NYC will continue to run Google ads in Spanish so that families searching for information about schools in New York City in Spanish.
- Each applicant, whether they are selected in the lottery or placed on the waitlist, will continue to receive a letter in both Spanish and English telling them the results of the lottery and the next steps to enrolling in the school.
- The school conducts outreach to the New York City Housing Authority sites that are within close proximity. The school visits these sites to hang flyers, leave applications and speak with residents to ensure they have the necessary information and materials needed to apply.

## **Recommendations**

### **I. Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools**

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

1. Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School, Achievement First East New York Charter School, and Achievement First Endeavor Charter School be and hereby are merged with Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools, with Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools as the surviving corporation.
2. Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools, 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 the education corporations Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School, Achievement First East New York Charter School, and Achievement First Endeavor Charter School hereby ceases, and Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools, the surviving corporation, is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges, immunities, powers and authority possessed, 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 Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools, the surviving corporation, 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 Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools, which is hereby amended to authorize the operation of twelve public charter schools as follows:
  - i. Achievement First Crown Heights Charter School
  - ii. Achievement First East New York Charter School
  - iii. Achievement First Endeavor Charter School
  - iv. Achievement First-Bushwick Charter School,
  - v. Achievement First Linden Charter School,
  - vi. Achievement First Charter School 10,
  - vii. Achievement First Charter School 11,
  - viii. Achievement First Charter School 12,
  - ix. Achievement First Brownsville Charter School,
  - x. Achievement First North Brooklyn Preparatory Charter School,
  - xi. Achievement First Apollo Charter School, and
  - xii. Achievement First Aspire Charter School

5. The merger herein shall take effect on April 1, 2016; and it is further

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) **Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) **Achievement First Brooklyn 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 **Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools**, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for **Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools**, as proposed by the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

## **II. Uncommon New York City Charter Schools**

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

1. Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School be and hereby is merged with Uncommon New York City Charter Schools, with Uncommon New York City Charter Schools as the surviving corporation.
2. Uncommon New York City Charter Schools, 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 the Education Corporation Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School hereby ceases, and Uncommon New York City Charter Schools, the surviving corporation, is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges, immunities, powers and authority possessed, 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 Uncommon New York City Charter Schools, the surviving corporation, 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 Uncommon New York City Charter Schools, which is hereby amended to authorize the operation of twelve public charter schools as follows:
  - i. Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School
  - ii. Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School
  - iii. Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School
  - iv. Brownsville Collegiate Charter School
  - v. Excellence Girls Charter School
  - vi. Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant
  - vii. Kings Collegiate Charter School
  - viii. Leadership Preparatory Bedford Stuyvesant Charter School
  - ix. Leadership Preparatory Brownsville Charter School
  - x. Leadership Preparatory Ocean Hill Charter School
  - xi. Leadership Prep Canarsie
  - xii. Ocean Hill Collegiate
5. The merger herein shall take effect on July 1, 2016; and it is further

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) **Uncommon New York City Charter Schools** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) **Uncommon New York City 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 **Uncommon New York City Charter Schools**, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for **Uncommon New York City 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 Achievement First Brooklyn Charter Schools Merger will become effective April 1, 2016.

The Regents action for the Uncommon New York City Charter Schools Merger will become effective July 1, 2016.

Attachments