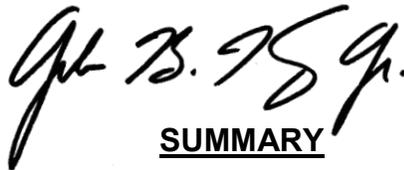




THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Charter Schools: Initial Applications and Charters
Authorized by the Board of Regents
DATE: June 16, 2014
AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

The Commissioner and Department staff recommends that the Board of Regents consider, approve and issue initial charters and provisional charters for the following two new charter schools:

Buffalo City School District

- Charter School of Inquiry

New York City School District

- Rosalyn Yalow Charter School (proposed to locate in CSD 10)

Reason(s) for Consideration

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

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee and the Full Board for action at the June 2014 meeting.

Background Information

The Commissioner and Department staff recommends that the Board of Regents issue the initial charters and provisional charters for the above listed two new charter schools.

Together, these two new elementary schools will add 885 high quality seats for families in Buffalo and the Bronx. Both schools are designed to achieve enduring learning outcomes by providing young students with Common Core standards-based instruction in language and literacy and mathematics using quality curricula and inquiry-based instruction in core subjects. Both schools are organized with a strong focus on the needs of students who may be educationally or economically disadvantaged, English language learners or students with disabilities through quality teaching, classroom embedded social-emotional supports and a positive and engaging school culture. Additional details about the two proposed charter schools and how Department staff reviewed the applications is included in the attached *Summary, Findings and Recommendation* for each proposed school. The Full Applications for each school are posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/startcharter.html>.

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, with no more than 57 in New York City) and requires that the two chartering entities create competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) processes for applications for the additional 260 charters. The statute dictated the timetable for the RFPs that were issued in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 and left to the discretion of the two Boards when subsequent years' RFPs would be issued. The Board of Regents RFP was issued in January 2014, and applications are accepted and reviewed in two rounds (March and August).

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 Department revised the charter school application process in the summer of 2010 to align with the criteria that is outlined in Chapter 101 of the Laws of 2010. The Regents approved and issued charters to seven new charter schools in 2010; to nine new charter schools in 2011 and to thirteen new charter schools in 2012 and to eight new schools in 2013, for a total of 37 new schools under the new process.

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 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. In 2014 (Round 1), a total of 31 letters of intent were submitted, and 15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in either Round 1 or Round 2.

- 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. Eleven applications were submitted and reviewed in 2014 Round 1. Each accepted application was rigorously evaluated by a four-member expert panel including 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 Director of the Charter School Office.
- 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. The Department conducted capacity interviews with six applicant groups in 2014 Round 1.
- Recommendations are made 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. After full evaluation of the information provided through capacity interviews and public comments, staff recommends two new school applications for consideration by the Regents. The Department found that the remaining 2014 Round 1 applications were fundamentally lacking in the presentation of a complete, comprehensive and viable school design plan or capacity to implement that plan. Department staff informed applicants of the option to withdraw the applications and consider resubmitting in future RFP rounds and all nine applicants did so.

An up-to-date summary of the RFP application cycles conducted by the Department on behalf of the Regents, the number of charters issued during each cycle, and the number of charters remaining to be issued is presented below:

RFP Cycle	Letters of Intent Submitted	Full Applications Submitted	Charters issued (# in NYC)	Charters remaining to be issued under cap (# in NYC)
2010	39	35 prospectuses were submitted; 16 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 15 full applications were submitted	7 (5)	123 (52)
2011	100	80 prospectuses were submitted; 37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 36 full applications were submitted	9 (7)	114 (45)
2012 Round 1	30	20 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 14 full applications were submitted	3 (3)	111 (42)
2012 Round 2	54	37 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 25 full applications were submitted	10 (8)	101 (34)
2013	99	60 applicants were invited to submit full applications; 55 full applications were submitted	8 (6)	93 (28)
2014 Round 1	31	15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in either Round 1 or Round 2; 11 full applications were submitted in Round 1	2 (1)	91 (27)

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Regents find 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 a charter and provisional charter to the **Charter School of Inquiry** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

VOTED: That the Regents find 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 a charter and provisional charter to the **Rosalyn Yalow Charter School** for a term of five years in accordance with §2851(2)(p) of the Education Law.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action is effective immediately.

Attachments



New York State Education Department Charter School Office

Charter School Application Summary, Findings and Recommendation

Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2014 Request for Proposals to
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents
to establish the proposed:

Charter School of Inquiry

June 2014

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Charter School of Inquiry

Name of Charter School	Charter School of Inquiry
Lead Applicant(s)	Helene Kramer
District of Location	Buffalo City School District
Opening Date	August 24, 2015
Projected Charter Term	June 24, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	None
Partners	None
Facility	Private space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 150 students in Grades K-2; growing to 350 students in Grades K through 6
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	Possibility of adding Grades 7 and 8 in next term
Mission Statement	<i>“The Charter School of Inquiry (CSI) will achieve breakthrough outcomes for City of Buffalo children in Kindergarten through Grade 6 by creating an inquiry-based learning environment with an intense focus on learning to read and write well in all subject areas. CSI offers an exceptionally high quality education using intentional reading and language development, aligned curriculum, engaging inquiry-based practices, and an outstanding system of supports. Children at CSI will learn to think critically, problem-solve and work collaboratively to enable their participation as citizens of their community and the world.”</i>

The objective of the Charter School of Inquiry (CSI or “the School”) is to provide families in the Buffalo City School district with a high-quality educational option for students in Grades K through 6. CSI will focus on developing students into proficient readers by the third grade. The curriculum will be centered on developing the disciplinary practices of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as the primary mode of inquiry in all subject areas, not just science and engineering core content. Through the curriculum and collaborative experiences in the School, the goal of CSI is to empower students to develop a healthy self-concept and sense of worth to the School, their families and their community.

Key Design Elements

The Key Design Elements are categorized by Instruction, Supports and Instructional Staffing.

Instruction

- **Rigorous, Inquiry-based Curriculum:** The School's curriculum will be aligned with the New York State Common Core State Standards (CCSS). CSI's instructional philosophy is founded on inquiry practices, such as raising questions, conducting investigations, interpreting and communicating information. Emphasis will be placed on firsthand investigations of their immediate surroundings as a way of infusing opportunities to learn from direct experience into all areas of the curriculum. CSI will use compelling and relevant interdisciplinary topics to foster children's acquisition and retention of content knowledge, while fostering their creativity and critical thinking skills and a lifelong love of learning.
- **Academic Focus on Literacy:** Recognizing that literacy is the foundation for success in school and in life, and that children must “learn to read” by 3rd grade in order to “read to learn” in subsequent grades, the academic focus is for every child at CSI to read proficiently, fluently and with good comprehension by the end of 3rd grade. Intentional reading instruction will be based on scientifically-based reading research.
- **Responsive Classroom (RC):** Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach for elementary school teaching and learning that recognizes that the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum, that how children learn is as important as what they learn, and that the greatest cognitive growth occurs when children interact with others about what they have experienced. RC will help to build a culture of community and mutual respect.
- **Collaborative Team-teaching:** Collaborative team-teaching will take place in every classroom with a teacher and teaching assistant, supported by a literacy coach and an inquiry coach. Special Education and ESL teachers will provide special attention to designated children. Interns working on their Master's degrees in Literacy (B-6) from local colleges and universities will be recruited to work as part of the instructional team in helping children who need individual or small group attention. Grade level teams will collaborate on developing curriculum aligned with the CCSS, measuring student growth, and developing strategies for struggling students to meet their academic goals.

- **Data-driven Instruction and Evidence of Performance:** This will be instituted through progress monitoring in reading, literacy, math and science that will inform responsive instruction and the creation of individual instruction plans for each child. Rubrics, student portfolios, performance tasks and projects for evaluating multi-disciplinary thematic units will also be utilized as evidence of student work and progress.
- **African and African-American History and Culture:** CSI founders feel strongly that African-American children, and indeed all children, need to gain a better understanding of African and African-American peoples – their history, culture, and contributions to the world. This knowledge is necessary to contest images in the dominant culture that breed feelings of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self-worth in many African-American children and will give all of CSI’s children perspectives that they do not ordinarily get.
- **Integrated Arts:** At CSI, integrated arts will help students to learn the disciplines of visual arts and music in an extended-day enrichment program. Creating, interpreting, and responding in the arts stimulates the imagination and encourages innovation and creative risk-taking in children.

Supports

- **Asset-based Model of Parent Involvement:** An asset-based model of parent involvement will engage parents as full partners in their children’s education, from classroom to boardroom, helping to create a unified set of supports, expectations and behaviors between school and home.
- **Extended School Day and Year:** The school day will be approximately two hours longer and the school year 10 days longer than the Buffalo Public Schools to allow for academic remediation, homework help, and extracurricular clubs. Teachers will have professional development and planning time to enhance their skills and share best practices. The school schedule incorporates a four-week Summer Institute in CSI’s first year of operation and at least one week every subsequent year, 50-60 minutes per day and a half day per week for common and individual planning time and/or professional development.
- **English Language Learner and Special Education Support Staff:** Special teachers for English language learners and students with disabilities will be hired to work directly with designated students.

Instructional Staffing

- **Inspirational Head of School:** CSI will hire an inspirational Head of School who will fuel a creative and innovative environment that resonates throughout the school and aligns with the school’s vision and mission.
- **Highly effective teachers:** Classroom teachers and special teachers will be NYS certified, demonstrate mastery in the cognitive and social skills involved in children’s development, and have a firm grasp of the Common Core standards and how to align

curriculum to them. They will demonstrate creativity in their teaching methods and help children to believe in themselves.

- **Low Teacher to Student Ratio:** A teaching assistant in every classroom, support from a literacy coach and an inquiry coach, Special Education teachers and ESL teachers, along with literacy interns from local colleges and universities, will all support classroom teachers and contribute to whole class, individual and small group instruction.

Education Plan

The annual calendar for Charter School of Inquiry is 195 days, approximately 10 days longer than the Buffalo Public Schools. The academic year will begin in August and end in late June. The school day will run from 7:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., with an afterschool program from 3:45 to 5:45 except for Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, the formal school day for students will end at 2:00 p.m. to allow teachers a 3-hour block for collaborative planning and professional development (2:00-5:00 p.m.). The afterschool program will begin at 2:00 p.m. and end at 5:45 p.m. on Wednesdays. Summer reading lists and activities will be provided to both students and parents to combat summer learning loss. A one-week summer camp may be offered, depending on need and resources.

Students and teachers will be organized for instruction in two sections in Grades K through 6 with a maximum of 25 students per classroom. A full time teaching assistant will be assigned to each classroom. Additional support will be provided by interns recruited from local colleges.

Based on the key shifts in content and approach identified in Common Core Standards for ELA and Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards, CSI's educational plan is:

- Inquiry-based, using a "Gather, Reason, Communicate" protocol grounded on the NGSS scientific and engineering practices for obtaining, evaluating and communicating information. The protocol will facilitate an inquiry approach in all the content areas for deep learning.
- Integrated thematic learning to achieve coherence and allow students to make connections across subjects and engage in real world applications.
- Aligned with appropriate grade level standards for CCSS and NYS to enable students to excel on state assessments and build background knowledge.
- Data driven with frequent progress monitoring of students using teacher-made curriculum, along with observational and standardized assessments to drive instruction.
- A collegial community of learners to engage all students as active participants in the classroom, and where teachers have a shared responsibility for all students' growth.

During the planning year, CSI founders, key staff and selected consultants in inquiry-based learning and the content areas will develop the comprehensive scope and sequence for the curriculum of inquiry. Teachers will contribute to this work as they come on staff. CSI will draw upon the skills and expertise of Firsthand Learning whose leadership and staff played a major role in the design and implementation of the Buffalo Public School Elementary Science Program called Buffalo TEAM Science, which has produced satisfactory results on the NYS Grade 4 Science tests.

In an Inquiry Period, students will engage in thematic, grade-level units designed with a real world context and/or application. The exchange of ideas, through discussion, debate and discourse, is key to scientific inquiry, integral to the NGSS standards and is the crux of learning in an inquiry classroom. Teachers will use a variety of instructional strategies to scaffold and guide students to practice critical thinking through discourse, including small group collaborative learning, roundtable discussions, Socratic circles, concept maps, graphic organizers and a daily inquiry notebook. The Inquiry Period will provide a purposeful context and an opportunity to apply developing literacy skills and concepts.

A daily Reading Block, organized according to the Reading and Writing Workshop developed by Lucy Calkins at Teachers College, will also be part of the curriculum. Teachers will use the components of a balanced literacy framework along with the Common Core State Standards to plan units of study and differentiated lessons to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms. Assessment data will be used to organize students into Guided Reading groups. To enable children to learn to read fluently and comprehend increasingly complex text as they progress in the grades, CSI will have a full-time literacy coach who will work with each teacher. Taking an inquiry approach toward literary and informational texts in the workshop model of instruction and classroom management will allow students to learn how to question and be critical of multiple modes of writing. ELA instruction will also incorporate CSI's emphasis on exploring African-American culture and history.

Mathematics instruction will occur daily and be organized as a workshop to replicate the student-centered focus of instruction in ELA and the Inquiry Period. CSI is considering the purchase of the *Bridges* K-5 Math Curriculum, developed by the Mathematics Learning Center, because of its strong infusion of mathematical modeling to learn math content. Math instruction will feature an emphasis on addressing specific learning gaps identified through assessments and analysis of student test data, a focus on strengthening students' comprehension and ability to solve word problems, and creating interesting and creative math learning experiences that engage students and motivate them to learn.

The teaching and learning of Social Studies and African-American history and culture will be guided by the NYS Learning Standards for Social Studies and CCSS for Literacy and Writing. CSI will use the active inquiry approach of the *History Lab*, developed through a partnership between the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus, Center for History Education and Maryland school systems. Rather than passively memorizing ready-made facts, students will employ their critical reading and writing skills and the inquiry process and analytical skills used

by historians. Special attention will be focused on the rich African-American history of the Buffalo area.

Additionally, the School will offer music, art, physical education and health. CSI will offer visual arts and music in the first year, using hands-on and inquiry-based instructional techniques. Students will participate in physical education and health activities with a physical education instructor and in the classroom with the teacher.

Informed by successful outcomes in the Early Reading First program (a federally-funded early learning program in Buffalo from 2007-2009), the founding group will use assessment to ensure that the School is meeting its goals for student academic achievement. Assessments at CSI will diagnose individual student strengths and weaknesses, inform classroom practice and the continuous improvement of the School's instructional program and address the reporting and performance requirements of NYSED. Teachers will use assessment data to develop individualized learning plans for each student that inform opportunities to reteach content, differentiate instruction and plan for interventions. The plans will also be part of the School's Response to Intervention approach for identifying and working with struggling students. Data analysis will be regularly scheduled as part of the Wednesday common planning time.

CSI will administer NYS assessments in ELA, math and science as Grades 3 through 6 are added beginning in the second year of operation. For students with special needs, CSI will comply with students' IEPs and ELL status requirements and administer the appropriate NYS alternative assessments and NYSESLAT exams.

To ensure that all children are reading fluently and with comprehension by third grade, classroom teachers in Grades K through 2 will closely monitor student performance three times a year and more frequently for struggling students. CSI will use the PALS-K and the PALS-1-3 developed by the Curry Graduate School at the University of Virginia. They will also administer the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-IV) three times a year to measure students' growth and development of vocabulary and receptive language, which is a strong predictor of learning to read without difficulty.

CSI will use the assessments from their anchor curriculum in literacy and math to ensure students are meeting grade-level target benchmarks. In literacy, they will administer the *Fountas and Pinnell* benchmark assessment system and teacher-created rubrics to assess students' writing three times a year. In math, the unit and interim assessments of the *Bridges* program will measure students' grasp of concepts, mathematical thinking and fluency in computational skills. CSI is also looking forward to the development of new, more performance-oriented assessment tools by PARCC and will review these tools as they become available.

Assessments in the Inquiry Period will involve checklists, reflection pieces and performance assessment tasks. Rubrics will be the primary mode of conducting overall assessments during the Inquiry Period. Additionally, every student will also have a portfolio of work products from each curricular area to demonstrate their progress.

The School will use the evidence-based practices of Responsive Classroom, developed by teachers and educators at the Northeast Foundation for Children, to create and sustain a positive

School culture. Responsive Classroom offers a proactive approach to discipline and student behavior management and is the basis for CSI's Code of Conduct. It is designed to integrate social and academic learning and improve the capacity of teachers to manage their classrooms effectively. The RC approach will include building a positive community through holding daily morning meetings and bi-weekly community meetings. Additionally, behavioral expectations, rituals and routines will be established during the first six weeks of school to ensure effective management of student behavior. CSI's discipline policy is aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). When a student with a disability violates the CSI Code of Conduct, the staff will work with the special education teacher to determine whether or not the disability is a contributing factor.

The founders believe that CSI's commitment to an inquiry-based approach makes learning more accessible for all students, including those with disabilities, second language learners and students coming from home with high risk factors for literacy difficulties. The workshop structure and collaborative nature of the classroom in math and ELA allows for differentiated instruction and leaning depending on each student's need and abilities. The support of specialized services from special education and English language learners teachers will be pushed into the classroom. In this way, service providers and teachers can reinforce authentic learning experiences in alignment with the curriculum to scaffold student learning. Additionally, CSI will implement NYS's Response to Intervention model, which includes screening, three tiers of instruction, progress monitoring and established decision-making rules.

The School's regular instructional protocol also calls for each student to have a data-driven individual instruction plan that is re-visited three times a year. The plan will describe a student's current performance in relation to the reading, writing, literacy and math targets established by the grade-level teachers and coaches following the administration of the first assessment in the fall. If students have IEPs, their IEP performance targets will govern the expectations for their learning; and every effort will be made by the team to exceed them. A final end-of-year progress monitoring assessment will determine the extent to which a student is meeting targets and whether enhanced summer reading and math plans need to be developed for that student.

CSI will offer a range of services to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the least-restrictive environment. Classroom teachers will collaborate with the special education teacher to provide personalized instruction in the classroom across all subject areas. Related services including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech pathology and counseling will be offered onsite by contracted providers for students with IEPs. CSI will work with representatives at the Committee on Special Education to provide parents with Related Service Agreements if a child needs services that the School cannot provide. CSI will abide by all laws and regulations set forth concerning the regular review of IEPs.

CSI will provide a push-in model for students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). A certified ESL teacher will integrate the skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading in English within the language arts component of instructions and in the interdisciplinary Inquiry Period. CSI believes that two lead teachers working together to support ELLs in learning content and English language skills will help children make a smoother transition to learning English proficiently while enabling them to be full partners in learning with their peers.

The School will engage and collaborate with students, parents, and community residents in order to accomplish its mission and goals. Through an inclusive governance structure, the Board will ensure active family and community involvement. It will hold regular meetings with elected community officials and community leaders, conduct well-publicized Board meetings, and promote an active parent association, staffed by the Head of School. CSI will employ an “asset-based” approach to parent engagement, in which the talents, interest, gifts, abilities, strengths, and aptitudes of parents are honored and used to create a more vibrant and inclusive School community. Board of Trustees by-laws reserves seats for a voting parent member and an ex-officio faculty representative, each of whom will be elected by their respective constituent group to represent their interests and perspectives. The School will publicize its board meetings and comply with all requirements of the Open Meetings Law.

Professional Development

The School will create a professional learning community through the design and execution of intensive, ongoing and embedded professional development (PD) to increase the capacity of teachers and staff to implement both the academic and social curriculum to meet the needs of students. Classroom teachers and teaching assistants, special teachers, coaches and staff will participate in four weeks of initial PD prior to the opening of school. Firsthand Learning will provide a two-week workshop in July designed to engage CSI teachers in an in-depth investigation of the content and process of inquiry-based learning. The second two weeks will be devoted to immersing teachers and staff in literacy development and instruction and the implementation of Responsive Classroom. Throughout the year, all teachers will have embedded, individualized coaching through a literacy coach and an inquiry coach. The collaboration with coaches, both in the classroom and during planning time, will focus on student work and student learning as the basis for instructional planning to increase student achievement. Ongoing professional development will include a three-hour block of time on Wednesdays as well as an hour or more of additional individual or collaborative planning time during recess and specials periods four days a week. After the first year, the annual summer professional development will be one week long.

Community Outreach

CSI has undertaken a rigorous community outreach campaign to inform the public about the School, its intended location on the east side of Buffalo, the student population to be targeted, grades to be served and a description of the key design elements envisioned for the School. The outreach campaign included parents, community leaders, politicians and local community and educational organizations. One-on-one meetings were held with a wide variety of community leaders; flyers announcing CSI’s town hall meetings and key design elements were distributed through email distribution lists to approximately 2500 people; flyers were posted in local businesses and left in Boys & Girls Clubs, where two of the meetings were held. CSI founders also appeared on TV and radio programs to inform the public about the School and solicit feedback. The applicant group solicited and considered community feedback regarding its school design through surveys from forum attendees.

School Governance and Leadership

Including the lead applicant Helene Kramer, the founding team consists of seven individuals, five of whom will serve as members of the School's initial Board of Trustees. A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the five individuals who will comprise the school's initial Board of Trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

The Board represents a diverse group of professionals with deep connections to the Buffalo community and an array of experience and professional skills that will allow them to oversee a high-performing, highly-effective new public charter school. Six of the seven founding members have extensive experience in the field of education. All have been passionate advocates for public school children in Buffalo; each has worked directly with the Buffalo Board of Education, school children, school administrators, teachers and parents during their careers.

The initial members of the Board of Trustees are:

- **Helene Kramer**, proposed trustee and lead applicant, was the Executive Director of Read to Succeed Buffalo (retired in 2011) and former president of the Buffalo Board of Education (on Board from 1994-1999, President 1999). Under her leadership, the Read to Succeed program implemented an Early Reading First Grant in 2007-2009 that increased the number of children in home-based childcare provider sites who were developmentally on target for language and literacy skills from 47% at pre-test to 85% at post-test in a 10-month period. She has also worked as a senior-level executive in the healthcare industry with expertise in management, planning, budgeting and marketing. Ms. Kramer co-wrote the charter school application with Patricia Dyer.
- **Peter Dow**, proposed trustee, is the Chairman of the Board at Firsthand Learning, Inc., a nonprofit corporation dedicated to promoting inquiry-based teaching, learning from direct experience, and closer links between cultural institutions and schools. He is an experienced science educator with expertise in inquiry-based teaching and learning. Mr. Dow's background is in teaching, education reform, curriculum development and professional development. He guided the inquiry design of CSI.
- **Melodie Baker**, proposed trustee, is a Regional Program Manager at the Service Collaborative of Western New York. She has experience in early childhood development, education, program management, parent and community engagement, public relations and marketing. She is leading CSI's community outreach efforts.
- **Betty Evans**, proposed trustee, was the Director of Early Childhood Education for Buffalo Public Schools (retired in 2011). She has also worked as a classroom teacher, reading teacher and instructional coach. Ms. Evans has contributed to the instructional design of CSI in the areas of early literacy, teacher recruitment, professional development, teacher evaluations and parent engagement.

- **Hon. James A. W. McLeod**, proposed trustee, is a City Court Judge in the City of Buffalo. Judge McLeod has experience mitigating risky behaviors for youth by creating programs to help them continue their education. He has been a founding member of many local grass-roots civil rights organizations, is active in many community-based organizations and has served on many local and regional boards. Judge McLeod has deep roots in the community and will help with legal issues and community engagement.

Additionally, the following two members of the founding team will continue their involvement with CSI.

- **Elizabeth Schoellkopf**, proposed Inquiry Coach at CSI, has been a science teacher for 14 years. Most recently, she has worked as a middle school teacher at Fourteen Holy Helpers School. Before that, she worked at Tapestry Charter School for eight years. Ms. Schoellkopf has experience in inquiry-based teaching and learning, developing interdisciplinary curriculum, Responsive Classroom, conducting professional development, CCSS and science curriculum. She also guided the inquiry-based design of CSI and contributed sections to the charter application.
- **Patricia Dyer** is a Senior Research Consultant for Measurement Inc. in the area of Evaluation and School Improvement Services (semi-retired). She is an experienced evaluator, researcher and grant writer who has conducted teaching and learning evaluations in Head Starts, K-12 schools and district wide programs throughout NYS and nationally. Ms. Dyer co-wrote the application with Helene Kramer and will continue to be engaged with CSI in an advisory capacity.

The School's staffing plan is aligned with its mission, objectives, key design elements, educational program, budget, and planned enrollment. The School will hire the Head of School and Director of Operations and two Coaches during the pre-opening period. These positions will provide the necessary leadership and oversight for the instruction and curriculum, student support services, and business and financial operations of the School.

The Head of School is responsible for aligning all School activities with CSI's mission. The successful candidate will create a culture of shared responsibility that ensures all School stakeholders collaborate in the best interests of children, set high expectations for children and staff, establish fiscal viability with resources aligned to support student achievement and include teachers and parents as partners in decision-making. CSI will engage in a rigorous recruitment, screening and selection process to find a candidate dedicated to inquiry-based instruction and a culture of collaboration. A national search will be conducted by posting the job description in *Education Week* and on non-profit websites such as Teach for America, the NY Charter Schools Association, educationamerican.net, EdJoin, schoolspring.com and others.

The School plans to attract and retain highly qualified staff members by offering competitive compensation and benefit and a collaborative and professional learning community. The School has budgeted \$90,000 for the principal and an average of \$44,600 for teachers which will enable the recruitment of teachers with a Master's degree or a Bachelor's degree and proof of excellence. Yearly one percent salary increases have been included in the operating budget as well as health care benefits and contributions to a retirement plan. The School will provide

strong supports for staff by encouraging teachers to collaborate and by scheduling ample time for preparation and professional development.

Facility

The School has not finalized a site but has a number of options for private facilities on the east side of Buffalo, the intended location. These options include the Central Terminal Restoration Coalition, the former St. John Canty School (offered for \$1 but would require renovations), two closed charter schools and two closed public elementary schools. CSI has consulted with an architectural firm that has designed elementary school for Buffalo Public Schools to help determine the space and square footage required to meet NYS regulations and the needs of the CSI program.

Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on District of Location

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on public and non-public schools in Buffalo, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Charter School for Inquiry on the Buffalo City School District public schools is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the Buffalo City School District, which is summarized below.

Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact Upon District of Location, 2015-16 to 2019-20¹

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year ²	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate ³	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment ⁴	Total District General Fund Budget ⁵	Percent of District Budget
2015-16	150	\$12,255	\$1,838,250	\$295,958	\$814,880,138	0.262%
2019-20	350	\$14,732	\$5,156,200	\$830,148		0.735%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2015-16 through 2019-20) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department’s State Aid Office. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is

¹ In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

² Source: Charter School for Inquiry Application

³ Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Spring 2014

⁴ Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

⁵ Source: Buffalo City School District Four Year Financial Plan (2014-15 to 2017-18)

assuming no growth in the Buffalo City School District budget during the duration of the school's charter.⁶

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district in which it will be located assumes that:

- There will be no fluctuation in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term;
- The charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment;
- All students will come from the district of location; and
- All students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

The specifics of the school's enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

Table 3: 2012-13 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location: Buffalo CSD⁷
Charter Term Year 1 Grade Configuration Based on 2012-13 District Demographics

	Total District Enrollment		Grade Level Enrollment		
			K	1	2
All Students	33,400		2,621	2,498	2,306
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	399	1%	26	34	29
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	2,127	6%	138	147	151
<i>Black</i>	16,990	51%	1,275	1,180	1,080
<i>Hispanic</i>	5,638	17%	488	505	396
<i>Multiracial</i>	853	3%	135	122	147
<i>White</i>	7,393	22%	559	510	503
Economically Disadvantaged	27,000	81%	2,278	2,230	2,025
Limited English Proficient	3,727	11%	303	360	323
Students with Disabilities	6,731	20%	493	532	502

⁶ Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

⁷ Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

Table 4: 2012-13 Elementary/Middle School Academic Proficiency Rates on NYS Assessments Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School⁸

Assessments	Buffalo CSD Proficiency	NYS Proficiency
<i>ELA Grades 3-5 Aggregate</i>	9.8%	30.5%
<i>Grade 3 ELA</i>	10.6%	31.1%
<i>Grade 4 ELA</i>	9.9%	30.3%
<i>Grade 5 ELA</i>	9.0%	30.2%
<i>Math Grades 3-5 Aggregate</i>	9.9%	33.5%
<i>Grade 3 Math</i>	11.9%	34.2%
<i>Grade 4 Math</i>	9.3%	36.4%
<i>Grade 5 Math</i>	8.6%	29.9%

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the Buffalo City School District held a hearing on April 23, 2014 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed Charter School of Inquiry. The hearing was attended by twelve individuals. Helene Kramer presented and questions were asked about the inquiry approach, the behavior management approach, the qualification of teachers, the recruitment strategy for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities and the School hours.

Application Review Process

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;
- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;

⁸ Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2012-13 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 1, a total of 31 letters of intent were submitted. After an initial review process, 15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 1 or Round 2. Eleven applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 1, including the application for the Charter School of Inquiry.

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application. Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Wednesday, April 30, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with four of the five initial board members proposed for the Charter School of Inquiry, one proposed staff member and one proposed pro-bono consultant. The proposed initial board of trustees was asked to complete a task based on fictional scenario created to highlight potential challenges in real-life implementation of the proposed school plan. The task was designed to evaluate the capacity of the proposed initial board members to prioritize issues, accurately identify possible root causes of implementation challenges and plan appropriate board actions, as well as assess understanding of the governance role, knowledge of the application and group decision-making dynamics. In addition, questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated adequate knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.⁹ This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - The applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2).
 - The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,¹⁰ of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 - The applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.¹¹ This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - The presentation in the application of a sound description of key features that are core to the school's overall design, and which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of mission; key design elements; enrollment, recruitment and retention; and community to be served.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound educational plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of achievement goals; school schedule and calendar; curriculum and instruction; assessment; school culture and climate; and special student populations and related services.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound organizational and fiscal plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of founding group capacity; board of trustees and governance; management and staffing; evaluation; professional development; facilities; insurance; health, food and transportation services; family and community involvement; financial management; budget and cash flow; pre-opening plan; and dissolution plan.

⁹ Education Law §2852(2) (a).

¹⁰ Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

¹¹ Education Law §2852(2) (b).

- An understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.
3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act¹² and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.¹³ This finding is based on the totality of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

Recommendation

Based on the Department's review and findings, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the Charter School of Inquiry to open in 2015 in Buffalo.

¹² Education Law §2852(2) (c).

¹³ As applicable pursuant to §2852(2) (d).



New York State Education Department Charter School Office

Charter School Application Summary, Findings and Recommendation

Application in response to the
New York State Education Department 2014 Request for Proposals to
Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents
to establish the proposed:

Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

June 2014

Table 1: Summary of the Proposed Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

Name of Charter School	Rosalyn Yalow Charter School
Lead Applicant(s)	Alec Diacou
District of Location	Bronx, District 10
Opening Date	September, 2015
Projected Charter Term	June 24, 2014 – June 30, 2020
Management Company	None
Partners	None
Facility	Private or public co-location space
Projected Enrollment and Grade Span during Charter Term	Opening with 202 students in Grade K through 1; growing to 536 students in Grades K through 5
Planned Grade Span (beyond Initial Charter Term)	810 students, K through 8
Mission Statement	<i>“The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School will eliminate the learning achievement gap for poor urban children—including special needs students and English language learners—by using an engaging and demanding curriculum to graduate students at or above grade level in literacy and math.”</i>

The objective of the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School (“RYCS,” “Yalow Charter School” or the “School”) is to raise student learning and achievement for at-risk students to a level that puts them on the trajectory to college. To achieve this objective, Yalow Charter School intends to provide more time in school, sustain a structured and supportive environment, instill a deep, rich knowledge base and create personalized learning opportunities. The School is named for Rosalyn Yalow, a female Nobel laureate in medicine (1977), who spent most of her professional and personal life in the Bronx.

Key Design Elements

- **Qualified Staff Focused on At-Risk Students:** K through Grade 8 students in CSD 10 are economically disadvantaged, with 92% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; more than 23% are in need of English language support; 24% are estimated to have disabilities and/or require special education. To support students with these risk factors, Yalow Charter School will provide licensed master social workers in each of the initial seven K through 1 classes, and in second grade.
- **Robust Response to Intervention:** Rosalyn Yalow Charter School will rigorously address the needs of special education and ELL students by hiring a dedicated team of 5-11 special education and ESL teachers, who will be responsible for managing student caseloads. In this way the School will be able to identify at-risk children and provide appropriate intervention for each of Yalow’s educational programs. Yalow will hire a director of assessment as the point person to coordinate the prompt implementation of IEPs.
- **Quality Curriculum and Pedagogy:** Yalow Charter School is committed to taking full advantage of the recently introduced New York Common Core State Standards by utilizing recently developed curriculum. Yalow will adopt the *Core Knowledge Language Arts* program by the Core Knowledge Foundation, recommended by the State Education Department for K-3, and the *Singapore Math* program for K-5. Starting in 4th grade, the School will use the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, also by the Foundation. Yalow Charter School will pursue inquiry-based science and implement regular arts and music instruction as well as chess and fencing.
- **High-Quality Collaborators:** To add instructional expertise, Yalow Charter School has entered into relationships with high-quality local institutions, including the Bronx Arts Ensemble, which provides arts, music, and dance programs to 65 schools in the Bronx; the Kasparov Chess Foundation, an international promoter of chess in schools; and a U.S. Olympic fencing team coach to provide fencing instruction.
- **Meticulous Data-Driven School:** Continuous student assessment is critical to inform differentiated student instruction and evaluate teaching methods, teachers and ultimately the performance of the School. The School will utilize the state-of-the-art STEP assessment system for literacy and the NWEA MAP system for math assessments of its students.

- **Comprehensive Professional Development:** To bring out the best in teachers, Yalow Charter School plans for 20-25 days of professional development (including a Summer Teacher Workshop), bi-weekly planning meetings for teaching staff, individual teacher support to implement core lesson plans, and frequent curriculum development to fully utilize the American Museum of Natural History as an extension of their classrooms.
- **Team Teaching:** Yalow Charter School will utilize a team teaching model that links an experienced teacher with a teacher with a social worker background in K through 2 classrooms or a certified teaching fellow in the later grades. This two-person team, in conjunction with the School's dedicated special education and ESL teachers supporting classroom teachers, will provide greater capacity for differentiated individual instruction and help for modifying small classroom-behavioral problems before they become bigger.
- **Family Involvement:** At Yalow Charter School, family involvement is critical to the educational experience. To initiate the family-school relationship, Yalow teachers will visit every new student's home at the start of the School year. Yalow also expects to engage families in the many special arts, music, chess, fencing, and science events during the school year.
- **Strong School Culture:** Yalow Charter School believes that building student character (high ideals, high standards, and high expectations) is a key component of School culture. To this end, Yalow will have a school uniform policy for its students and insist on courteous behavior, hard work, and no excuses from both faculty and students. In their efforts to develop the whole child, they will promote the disciplined activities of arts and chess/fencing from the start.
- **Low Student/Teacher Ratio:** The Yalow Charter School model maintains student to teacher ratios below 11:1 for the first five years of operation by limiting administrative staff and hiring 11 special education and ESL instructors to increase student achievement in earlier grades.
- **Extended School Day:** Yalow Charter School will operate a 10-hour school day, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., using staggered teaching schedules. Arts, music, chess, and fencing will take place in the school day. Most of the students will be financially disadvantaged, special education students, or English language learners and may be entering Kindergarten as much as 1.5 years behind their peers in reading and math. The extended day will give students the extra time to catch up academically.

Education Plan

The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School's academic calendar consists of 191 days of instruction, two weeks more than those for NYCDOE schools, running from the Tuesday after Labor Day through June. Yalow does not anticipate providing summer school. Rather, it will provide

students with ample opportunities for remedial instruction with an RTI team during the School year.

Students will arrive for breakfast between 7:30-8:00 a.m. with class instruction to begin at 8:00 a.m. and proceed until 6:00 p.m. The ELA block is 16 hours a week rather than the 10 hours recommended for the selected ELA curriculum to allow more time for the largely at-risk student population to master the material. Two hours a day will be spent on mathematics instruction. Time is built into the day for playtime, naptime, art and chess as well. Recognizing the large amount of time that teachers will be expected to interact with students each day, Yalow will provide teachers with two 60-minute prep periods daily.

To form the curriculum, Yalow will start by backward mapping Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to identify the main objectives in ELA, math, science and social studies. Teachers will use these objectives to shape lesson plans for each subject. For English Language Arts, Yalow will use the *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)* program for K-3, developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation. Beginning in Grade 4, they will begin using the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, also from the Foundation. *CKLA* includes two strands of instruction: a Skills Strand, designed to build students' decoding skills and a Listening and Learning Strand, designed to build students' language comprehension ability by exposing them to vocabulary, concepts and ideas through frequent read alouds. *Core Knowledge* is a sequential curriculum, and it outlines the content every child should learn in language arts and literature, social studies, mathematics, science, music and the visual arts throughout grade school.

The *CKLA* and *Core Knowledge Sequence* will be supplemented with additional math and science curriculum using *Singapore Math* by Singapore Math, Inc., an inquiry-based science program and visits to the American Museum of Natural History. The methodology of *Singapore Math* balances computational fluency with conceptual understanding, as advocated in *CKLA*. The math curriculum is aligned with the math topics outlined in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. The science curriculum will be aligned with the New York State Science Standards. Yalow will select an inquiry-based program based on how well it aligns with the new Next Generation Science Standards.

Social studies will be provided through the *Core Knowledge* curriculum, which aligns with NYS CCLS and provides students with a deep background in history, geography, government and citizenship. Additionally, to develop the whole child, arts, chess and fencing will be integrated with the core academics during the regular school day.

The use of master social workers in teaching teams for Grades K-2 is central to Yalow's mission of graduating every student at or above grade level in literacy and math. Yalow believes that trained social workers are required to ensure that the socio-emotional problems that children inevitably bring into the classroom are recognized and treated before they disrupt the classroom environment. By getting to know the students and their families well in the earliest years, Yalow intends to identify learning and emotional strengths and weaknesses and begin providing cognitive-behavioral techniques to be used at school and home.

Yalow will administer diagnostic, formative, benchmark and summative assessments to inform instructional planning. The Principal and Director of Assessment will be responsible for coordinating the administration of assessments. The goal of the assessment system at Yalow is to eliminate the learning achievement gap for economically disadvantaged urban children and graduate students at or above grade level in language arts and math. Yalow will use the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) (for math) and University of Chicago Urban Education Institute's Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) (for literacy) interim assessment programs in a 5-8 week cycle to guide its teachers in reflective practices and its administrators in making professional development decisions about teachers and monitoring student academic achievement. Data analysis professional development days will occur every other Friday afternoon. Yalow is hiring professional coaches to develop teacher awareness of STEP and NWEA tools and hone their differentiated instruction skills during summer professional development and several times throughout the year.

Yalow will develop a School-wide professional climate for delivering purposeful teaching with intense and ongoing professional training to make data-driven instructional decisions for administrators and teachers. All Yalow teaching teams (master teacher, teacher-social worker) and administrators will receive 20 days of professional development training during the summer professional development session and 12 full-day sessions during the School year. Combined with the bi-weekly Friday afternoon professional development hours, teaching teams will receive about 8 weeks of professional development for each of the first two years. Training in reading, math and science will lessen as teachers become proficient in the new teaching methods. Some teachers will become coaches within 2-3 years, building Yalow's internal capacity and reducing reliance on outside consultants. Master teachers will be responsible for mentoring their teaching team cohorts, and will receive professional training to do so. Currently, the organizations that will offer professional development are the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (for STEP literacy assessment), Northwest Evaluation Association (for NWEA math assessments), Singapore Math, Inc. and the American Museum of Natural History. The summer professional development session will cover school culture, classroom management, daily lesson planning, unit planning, home visits, instructional techniques and the use of data to inform instruction.

Yalow Charter School is based on the belief that the success of the academic program, in terms of eliminating the learning achievement gap, depends on the creation and maintenance of a strong school culture for students, staff and parents. Yalow's principal will be responsible for establishing a vibrant learning environment built on character by using practices and rewards that have proven successful in "no excuses" charter schools such as KIPP and Uncommon Schools. The instruction of chess and fencing has been chosen to support this aim as they will teach children focus and respect for others.

The School will adopt a disciplinary policy and Code of Conduct that ensure a safe and orderly climate to support student learning, growth, and development. The code will comply with all laws regarding discipline of students with disabilities, including considering if the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability. Consistent with the Dignity for All Students Act, the Code will contain a definition of harassment and bullying and prohibit both.

Yalow's team-teaching model enables the School to evaluate students on a daily basis in the classrooms to understand what each student needs. Yalow's Response to Intervention (RTI)

program is designed to catch students with learning problems in the first few weeks of the School year, before serious failure occurs, and design interventions to put them back on track to academic success. The RTI program will operate on a six to eight week cycle for revising existing students' intervention plans. After a two-tiered RTI process determines that special education services may be necessary, a student will be recommended to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for evaluation. Students with IEPs will be educated in the least restrictive environment. Yalow will hire licensed special education teachers to provide many IEP services, including bilingual speech therapy. IEP students will get social/emotional support in the classroom.

The School will run a full-inclusion program for its English language learners (ELLs). Yalow will follow all applicable laws in serving its ELL students, including student identification, annual notification to parents, reclassification to fluent English proficient status following the annual NYSESLAT to determine ongoing eligibility and evaluation of ELL programs.

The School will engage and collaborate with students, parents, and community residents in order to accomplish its mission and goals. All parents or guardians, students, teachers and School leadership will be asked to sign a Commitment to Excellence, explicitly outlining how they will help support the School's mission. Parents will be encouraged to actively participate in a variety of School functions and to volunteer at the School. They will have regular access to their children's teachers to ask questions and will receive reports from teachers via phone calls, email and letters. The School will translate materials and have Spanish-speaking staff to maximize communication with all students and their families and promote an active Parents Advisory Council by providing space to meet and a computer to help organize its activities. Yalow will hold regular meetings with elected community officials and community leaders and conduct well-publicized and interactive Board meetings. The School will publicize its board meetings and comply with all requirements of the Open Meetings Law.

Community Outreach

Conversations by the founders with parents, community leaders, and economic stakeholders over the past two years have affirmed the needs and vision for Yalow Charter School. Since August 2011, Mr. Diacou has met with over 35 community organizations, newspapers and stakeholders to keep them abreast of Yalow's charter proposal. He met with the CSD 10 Superintendent in 2013 and again on March 20, 2014, and with the CEC on January 28, 2014, and made formal presentations to the education committees of Community Boards 7 and 8— representing about 90% of District 10—in 2012, 2013, and 2014. He also met with nine of the district's elected officials, 15 Head Start programs, 3 churches, and 2 synagogues, and conducted 20 parent meetings. The yalowcharter.org website, launched February 4, 2014, includes online parent information sheets, allowing families to sign up for charter updates in English or Spanish. The applicant group solicited and considered community feedback regarding its school design through surveys from forum attendees.

Meetings with leaders and community organizations have included:

- Local politicians such as Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, Councilman Andy Cohen, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, Congressman Eliot

Engel, Councilman Fernando Cabrera, Senator Adriano Espaillat, Senator Jeff Klein, Senator Gustavo Rivera Monica Major, Education Liaison Bronx Borough President, Paul Del Ducca, Chief of Staff Bronx Borough President

- Archdiocese of New York
- District 10 Superintendent and CEC
- Allen Hospital/NY Presbyterian
- Horace Mann School
- Riverdale Mental Health Association
- CB 7 Houses of Worship (34 letters)
- CB 8 Houses of Worship (29 letters)
- Montefiore Medical Center

School Governance and Leadership

Including the lead applicant Alec Diacou, the founding team consists of twelve individuals, ten of whom will serve as members of the School's initial Board of Trustees. A School Trustee Background Information form, Statement of Assurance and resume or curriculum vitae was provided for each of the ten individuals who will comprise the school's initial Board of Trustees. As required, the applicant group has provided a set of draft by-laws and a draft code of ethics.

The Board represents a diverse group of professionals with teaching experience as well as expertise in curriculum development, finance and risk control, fund-raising, facilities planning, professional development, real estate, technology, and board governance.

The initial members of the Board of Trustees are:

- **John W. Carr**, proposed trustee, is a retired corporate lawyer. He practiced at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett for over 25 years, focused on mergers and acquisitions, private equity and capital markets. Mr. Carr has also served on the boards of non-profit organizations, including All Souls School, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NYC Outward Bound Center, Apollo Theater Foundation. He is the proposed Board Chair.
- **Gregoria Feliciano**, proposed trustee, is Community School Director for the Children's Aid Society at PS 50, where she manages professional development for teaching staff, health and mental health services and after-school programs. She is bilingual (Spanish) and holds an MA in Education, Supervision/Administration with a NYS District Administrator Advanced Diploma.
- **Dr. Sandra Hayes**, proposed trustee, is Professor of Mathematics at City College and a Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Center. She has been a researcher and teacher at universities in Germany and France for over 20 years and a delegate to the United Nations Sessions of the Commission of the Status of Women in 2007 and 2008. She is the proposed Board Vice Chair and the liaison for the implementation of the Singapore math program.

- **William Jackson**, proposed trustee, is the Co-Director of the Center for Lesson Study and Adjunct Faculty at the Harlem Village Graduate School of Education. He is a bilingual grade school and ESL teacher, a professional development specialist and author of works on Singapore math and lesson study.
- **Benjamin Kearney**, proposed trustee, is the Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of Guidestone, an Ohio social service agency that guided the creation of the Stepstone Academy Charter School on its Cleveland campus. Stepstone has had great success educating urban youth using wraparound services for children and families similar to those proposed at Yalow.
- **Ivan Lee**, proposed trustee, is a NYC Police Officer and Fencing Commissioner for the NYC Public Schools Athletic League. He is also a former 8th grade public school teacher and Olympian (4th place in the 2004 U.S. Olympic Fencing Team). Mr. Lee has also has experience as an Urban Youth Counselor for New Horizons Ministries, a fencing instructor and a staff member for Leaders Among Minorities Everywhere (FLAME) program.
- **Michael Rosen**, proposed trustee, is the Director of Capital Markets at 1010 Data, which is a real estate financial technology company that provides mortgage-backed securities services. He has deep experience with the methods and tools of assessment and data analysis and provides real estate knowledge.
- **Shirley Saunders**, proposed trustee, is a Deputy City Clerk for the City of New York at the Bronx City Hall. She is the former senior staff assistant to Congressman Eliot Engel and has expertise in navigating the political landscape of the Bronx. Ms. Saunders is the proposed Board Secretary.
- **William Scribner**, proposed trustee, is the Founder of arts and music programs in 65 public schools in the Bronx. He is a proven fundraiser as founder and director of Bronx Arts Ensemble and a Bronx community organizer.
- **Benjamin Yalow**, proposed trustee, is the Comptroller at Chicon 7 Conference. He has worked in computer technology at educational institutions for 25 years and is the son of Rosalyn Yalow. As Vice President of the Rosalyn S. Yalow Foundation, he is responsible for grant decisions, fund solicitations and IT management. He has served on the board of three non-profits.

Additionally, the following two members of the founding team will continue their involvement with Yalow.

- **Alec H. Diacou** is self-employed as a Bronx non-profit organizer addressing economic development, senior services and the childhood obesity epidemic. With a background in economics and finance, he has served as a project finance specialist and financial advisor for state and local governments. Mr. Diacou is responsible for recruiting the founding

team and writing the charter application. He is the proposed executive director of the School.

- **Shayne Evans** is the Director of the four campuses of the University of Chicago Charter School. He has served as the Director of the University of Chicago Charter School Woodlawn campus and co-founded the University of Chicago Charter School Carter G. Woodson campus as a middle school Assistant Director. He has also worked as Lead Literacy Teacher at the University of Chicago Charter School North Kenwood Oakland campus and an 8th grade math teacher. Mr. Evans is the proposed special consultant assigned to head the search committee for a principal.

The School's staffing plan is aligned with its mission, objectives, key design elements, educational program, budget, and planned enrollment. The School will hire the Executive Director and Principal during the pre-opening period. These positions will provide the necessary leadership and oversight for the instruction and curriculum, student support services, and business and financial operations of the School. A Director of Finance will be added in the third year of operation.

The Executive Director will be responsible for the day-to-day business management of the School. He will be the administrative and policy leader of the School, responsible for maintaining the vision, high ideals and goals set out by the Board of Trustees. He will ensure that the School is properly staffed and funded to achieve academic goals and keep the Board informed of School operations and progress on student assessment. Together with the Principal, the Executive Director will ensure that staff receive outside professional development training and manage the School's contracts with outside consultants. The Principal will be the instructional leader of the School; he/she will manage the academic program and assessment program and be responsible for increasing teacher effectiveness. The Principal will coach classroom teaching teams, conduct observation cycles, assists with modeling lessons and schedule outside professional development consultants to ensure teaching teams receive the requisite amount of skills training in curriculum and assessment tools. The Board will begin an extensive search for the principal, with the help of a consultant, immediately after the School's charter is authorized.

The School plans to attract and retain highly qualified staff members by offering competitive salaries for all positions. The School has budgeted \$125,000 for the Executive Director, \$100,000 for the Principal and an average of \$70,000 for teachers which will enable the recruitment of teachers with a Master's degree. Yalow will provide teachers with a career path that rewards their success both with more responsibility and significantly greater compensation. Upon initial hire, teachers will receive base salary commensurate with that of NYC public school teachers, plus up to an additional 10% to 15% merit bonus provided they continue at the school for at least an additional year. The School will provide strong supports for staff by encouraging teachers to collaborate and scheduling ample time for preparation, professional development, mentoring, and academic meetings.

Facility

Rosalyn Yalow Charter School intends to request NYCDOE co-location space (incubation or permanent) and is also considering various opportunities to lease a private facility. One option is a recently closed Catholic Archdiocese school which would be leased for two years, after which the School will occupy a building built with the help of the non-profit Civic Builders. The Fordham United Methodist Church has also been offered at an affordable price. However, it is a smaller space and would require downsizing the School model. At the request of the CSO, the applicant has provided contingency enrollment, staffing and fiscal plans for this possibility.

Projected Fiscal and Programmatic Impact on District of Location

The applicant group provided an analysis of the fiscal and programmatic impact of the proposed school on public and non-public schools in New York City, indicating that the fiscal impact of the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School on the New York City District public schools is expected to be nominal.

The New York State Education Department also conducted additional analysis on the projected fiscal impact of the School on its district of residence, the New York City School District (NYCSD), which is summarized below.

Table 2: Projected Fiscal Impact Upon District of Location, 2015-16 to 2019-20¹

Year	Number of Students Enrolled in Charter School Per Year ²	Charter School Basic Tuition Rate ³	Total Charter School Basic Tuition Only	Estimated District Special Education Payment ⁴	Total District General Fund Budget ⁵	Percent of District Budget
2015-16	202	\$13,777	\$2,782,954	\$375,699	\$20,623,441,377	0.015%
2019-20	536	\$17,789	\$9,534,904	\$1,287,212		0.052%

The calculations above assume charter school basic tuition rates in the charter period (2015-16 through 2019-20) based on a trend analysis calculated by the Charter School Office and approved by the Department's State Aid Office. In order to conservatively avoid underestimating the fiscal impact that the charter school will have on the district going forward, the Department is assuming no growth in the New York City School District budget during the duration of the school's charter.⁶

¹ In order to conservatively estimate the fiscal impact upon the district of location, maximum enrollment figures for each year were used. For additional information, please refer to Table 2

² Source: Rosalyn Yalow Charter School Application

³ Source: Education Law §2856(1)(a)(iii) and NYS Education Department Office of State Aid Charter School Basic Tuition Rate Analysis, Spring 2014

⁴ Based on 2011-12 calculated special education classification rate for the district of location, as collected by NYSED Information and Report Services

⁵ Source: The City of New York 2015 Executive Budget, http://www.nyc.gov/html/omb/downloads/pdf/erc5_14.pdf

⁶ Additional notes: While the school has included other federal grants and/or funds that may flow through the district to be received by the school in its proposed budget, this analysis does not account for these sources of potential revenue, nor does it include the value of certain services (e.g. transportation) that the district is required to provide the charter school. However, the

It should be noted that, given the nature of district-based per-pupil funding, the estimates made by the Department in conducting this analysis are subject to unpredictable financial fluctuations. For forecasting purposes, the fiscal impact of this charter school on the district in which it will be located assumes that:

- There will be no fluctuation in the grade levels served by existing charter schools over the course of the charter term;
- The charter school will be able to meet its projected maximum enrollment;
- All students will come from the district of location; and
- All students will attend every day for a 1.0 FTE.

The specifics of the school’s enrollment composition are still unavailable; however, the Department acknowledges that the programmatic and fiscal impact of the proposed charter school on other public and private schools in the same area will also be influenced by the proportion of charter school enrollees that would have attended a same-district public or private school had it not been for the presence of this charter school.

**Table 3: 2012-13 Demographic Detail for Proposed District of Location:
New York City Geographic District # 10 - Bronx⁷**

Charter Term Year 1 Grade Configuration Based on 2012-13 District Demographics

	Total District Enrollment		Grade Level Enrollment	
			K	1
All Students	56,469		4,430	4,648
<i>American Indian/Alaska Native</i>	238	0.4%	25	26
<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	4,423	8%	173	200
<i>Black</i>	10,192	18%	693	754
<i>Hispanic</i>	38,133	68%	3,253	3,420
<i>Multiracial</i>	229	0.4%	31	24
<i>White</i>	3,254	6%	255	224
Economically Disadvantaged	49,817	88%	4,111	4,333
Limited English Proficient	11,838	21%	1,041	1,273
Students with Disabilities	9,624	17%	659	696

analysis also does not account for district per-pupil expense and overall resource savings that are likely to result from a reduction in the number of students attending district public schools as a result of students attending nonpublic schools located in the school district.

⁷ Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2012-13 Report 303 BEDS Day Enrollment Verification Report by Location of Enrollment & Student Subgroup

Table 4: 2012-13 Elementary/Middle School Academic Proficiency Rates on NYS Assessments Based on Grade Configurations for Proposed School⁸

Assessments	NYC #10 Proficiency	NYS Proficiency
<i>ELA Grades 3-5 Aggregate</i>	19.0%	30.5%
<i>Grade 3 ELA</i>	17.7%	31.1%
<i>Grade 4 ELA</i>	20.0%	30.3%
<i>Grade 5 ELA</i>	19.3%	30.2%
<i>Math Grades 3-5 Aggregate</i>	22.6%	33.5%
<i>Grade 3 Math</i>	20.4%	34.2%
<i>Grade 4 Math</i>	26.9%	36.4%
<i>Grade 5 Math</i>	20.5%	29.9%

Public Hearing and Public Comment

As required by the Charter Schools Act, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) held a hearing on April 24, 2014 to solicit comments from the community concerning the proposed Rosalyn Yalow Charter School. The hearing was attended by 19 individuals, including three NYCDOE staff. After a presentation by the School, questions were asked about the math program, funding for arts, music, chess and fencing classes, location and lottery preferences. Two individuals signed up to comment: remarks were in support of the School overall but expressed concern about the length of the School day.

The Department directly notified the Chancellor of the NYCDOE, as well as public and private schools in the region, of the charter school application and issued an open call for written public comment via the State Education Department Charter School Office website. No public comment has been received. Chancellor Farina commented, in a letter to Commissioner King dated June 13, 2014, “The NYCDOE found this proposal to be well-designed, offering a rigorous educational model to meet the needs of elementary school students in CSD 10. The applicant demonstrated significant community engagement and community support for the proposed charter school.” Based on the proposed siting of the School in private space, “The Chancellor recommends this charter application to support the children of New York City.”

Application Review Process

On January 2, 2014, in accordance with the New York State Charter Schools Act, the New York State Education Department (the “Department”) released the 2014 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents. The charter school application process used by the Board of Regents and the Department is multi-staged and

⁸ Source: Student Information Repository System (SIRS) 2011-12 Report 101 High School Accountability Data Verification Report; 2012-13 Report 102 Elementary/Middle-Level Accountability Data Verification Report

designed to ensure that any charter school applicant presented to the Board of Regents for possible approval demonstrates a detailed and complete school design proposal that:

- includes a clear plan to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, and students who are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price lunch program;
- provides evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the Regents for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school;
- meets all requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act as well as all other applicable laws, rules, regulations;
- demonstrates the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner;
- is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the Act; and
- would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school.

In addition, the applicant group and founding board of trustees must demonstrate appropriate knowledge, capacity, and abilities to effectively create, maintain, and oversee a high-quality charter school.

During 2014 Round 1, a total of 31 letters of intent were submitted. After an initial review process, 15 applicants were invited to submit full applications in Round 1 or Round 2. Eleven applications were submitted and evaluated in Round 1, including the application for the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

To assess whether to recommend approval or denial of the charter application to the Board of Regents, the Department established review panels to thoroughly evaluate each full application. Each panel was made up of professional expert consultants, peer reviewers who are school leaders and educators active in charter and public schools in New York, as well as qualified Department staff members. The review panel members reviewed, rated, and commented on each section of the application according to the criteria published in the Application Kit.

On Tuesday, May 13, 2014, Department staff conducted a three-hour capacity interview with the six of the ten initial board members proposed for the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School. The proposed initial board of trustees was asked to complete a task based on fictional scenario created to highlight some likely potential challenges in real-life implementation of the proposed school plan. The task was designed to evaluate the capacity of the proposed initial board members to prioritize issues, accurately identify possible root causes of implementation challenges and plan appropriate board actions, as well as assess understanding of the governance role, knowledge of the application and group decision-making dynamics. On Friday, May 30, 2014, a second capacity interview was conducted in order to meet the remaining four members of the proposed initial board of trustees and to learn more about the applicants plans for facility contingencies. At both interviews, questions were posed to the proposed initial trustees and founding group members, including general questions around New York State Charter School

Law, the roles and responsibilities of various members in the proposed school community, and accountability to stakeholder groups as well to as the Board of Regents as authorizer. To fully understand the proposed academic program, governance role and fiscal viability of the proposed School, staff asked targeted questions of the applicant group.

The responses demonstrated adequate knowledge and grasp of key areas. Members of the applicant group as a whole and individually demonstrated knowledge of the charter school application and the proposed School. Structures, systems, protocols and procedures are in place to permit the board to effectively govern the School. The applicants addressed questions posed with specific and detailed information that presented a clear, realistic picture of how the School expects to operate.

Findings

Based on the comprehensive review of the application and of the applicant, founding group, and proposed board of trustees, the Department makes the following findings:

1. The charter school described in the application meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.⁹ This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - the applicant has included in the application the information required by §2851(2)
 - the proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the NYS Board of Regents,¹⁰ of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal free and reduced price lunch program as required by Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(i)
 - the applicant has conducted public outreach to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the proposed charter school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner.¹¹ This finding is based on the following (among other things):
 - The presentation in the application of a sound description of key features that are core to the school's overall design, and which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in

⁹ Education Law §2852(2)(a).

¹⁰ Note, the data upon which to base the enrollment and retention targets mandated by the amendments to the Act was not available at the time the statute mandated the RFP be issued. As a result, the Department evaluated the plans for student enrollment, recruitment, and retention plans of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Department could make the determination that the applicant would meet or exceed the enrollment and retention targets when developed. During the first year of the charter term, the Department will develop such targets and incorporate these targets into the school's charter agreement performance expectations.

¹¹ Education Law §2852(2)(b).

- the Department's RFP in the areas of mission; key design elements; enrollment, recruitment and retention; and community to be served.
- The presentation in the application of a sound educational plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of achievement goals; school schedule and calendar; curriculum and instruction; assessment; school culture and climate; and special student populations and related services.
 - The presentation in the application of a sound organizational and fiscal plan, which rigorously addresses the criteria outlined in the Department's RFP in the areas of founding group capacity; board of trustees and governance; management and staffing; evaluation; professional development; facilities; insurance; health, food and transportation services; family and community involvement; financial management; budget and cash flow; pre-opening plan; and dissolution plan.
 - An understanding of the New York State Charter Schools Act, and the skill, will and capacity to successfully launch and operate a high quality public charter school.
3. Granting the proposed charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement, will materially further the purposes of the Act¹² and will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.¹³ This finding is based on the totality of the information presented in the application and during the application review process, as summarized in this document.

Recommendation

Based on the Department's review and findings, Commissioner John B. King, Jr. recommends that the New York State Board of Regents approve the proposal to establish the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School to open in 2015 in New York City.

¹² Education Law §2852(2)(c).

¹³ As applicable pursuant to §2852(2)(d).