



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

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Cosimo Tangorra, Jr. *Cosimo Tangorra Jr.*  
**SUBJECT:** Revisions to a Charter Authorized by the Board of Regents: Charter High School for Law and Social Justice  
**DATE:** May 11, 2015  
**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Elizabeth R. Berlin*

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Decision**

Should the Regents approve the proposed revision to the charter of Charter High School for Law and Social Justice?

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Required by New York State law.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This issue will be before the Board of Regents P-12 Education Committee for discussion and action, and before the Full Board for action at the May 2015 meeting of the Board of Regents.

#### **Background Information**

The Board of Trustees of the Charter High School for Law and Social Justice has submitted a request to amend the school's charter, proposing a change in location. Information about the revision request is provided below.

Name of Charter School	Charter High School for Law and Social Justice
Board Chair	Richard Marsico, Esq.
District of Location	Approved to open in CSD 8, 9 or 12
Opening Date	September 2015
Current Charter Term	September 2, 2015 – June 30, 2020
Facility	Proposed private facility in Bronx CSD 11
Current Grade Levels/Number of Students	Approved to open with 120 students in grade 9 and to serve up to 450 students in grades 9 through 12.
Mission	<i>The Charter High School for Law and Social Justice will provide students from the southern Bronx with a comprehensive high school education and lay the academic and social groundwork for success in college and careers. Using a theme of law and social justice, the School will engage, inspire, and empower students, and will equip them with the academic skills to earn a Regents diploma and gain admission to the college of their choice prepared for success. The School will create a pathway for its students to law school and careers as attorneys. The pathway will include mentoring opportunities with law students and attorneys and partnerships with institutions of higher learning. These institutions will offer college and law school experiences to our students and share with them the academic benchmarks and habits necessary to gain entrance to college and law school.</i>
Proposed Revision	<b>The School seeks to amend its charter to open for instruction within a private facility in Bronx CSD 11.</b>

On December 17, 2013, the Board of Regents approved and issued a five-year initial charter to the Charter High School for Law and Social Justice (or the “School”). The School will serve 120 grade 9 students in year 1 and grow to serve 450 grade 9-12 students by year 5. The school was to be located in Bronx Community School Districts (“CSD”) 8, 9, or 12, but had difficulty securing private facilities. The school requested approval in March 2014 to use the 2014-2015 school year as a planning year and delay opening until September 2015. The Department approved the request and has worked with the School throughout the pre-opening period to ensure that all required school components are in place prior to opening.

Pursuant to New York Education Law §2853(3)(e), the School submitted a written request dated June 6, 2014 to the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) requesting co-location space for the 2014-2015 school year in the three approved Bronx Community School Districts and also in CSD 7. A letter from NYC DOE to the

school on November 10, 2014 denied their request for co-located space in Bronx Community School Districts 7, 8, 9, and 12.

Unable to secure public or private space within Community School Districts 7, 8, 9, or 12, the School's Trustees request that the Board of Regents approve a material revision to its charter to allow the School to change the district of location for the School to New York CSD 11, where the School has obtained private space. This space, which is directly north of CSD 8, is both suitable in terms of size and cost and also available for academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Thereafter, the School will need to find a permanent location for the School, and the current lease allows the School time to follow-up on a promising leads to secure a permanent facility in the Bronx.

### **Summary of Public Comment**

As required by the Charter School Act, the New York City Department of Education held a public hearing about the proposed revision of the school's charter on Thursday, April 2, 2015. Two members of the public were present; one of whom was associated with the charter school. One member of the public spoke in favor of the revision. No members spoke in opposition.

### **Recommendation**

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that: (1) the charter school meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) the charter school can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to amend the charter is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) granting the request to amend the charter will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for Charter High School for Law and Social Justice and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

The Regents action for Charter High School for Law and Social Justice will become effective immediately.