



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

TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: John B. King, Jr.
SUBJECT: Proposed Revision to the Initial Charter of the Health Sciences Charter School – Authorized by the Board of Regents
DATE: March 29, 2011

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

I recommend that the Board of Regents approve a revision to the initial charter of the Health Sciences Charter School, which is authorized by the Board of Regents, changing the school's location from 169 Sheridan Parkway Drive in the Kenmore Tonawanda School District to 1140 Ellicott Street in the Buffalo Public School District.

The Board of Regents issued a charter to the Health Sciences Charter School in July 2009 and the school opened for instruction in August 2010 in the Kenmore Tonawanda School District. The Board of Trustees of the Health Sciences Charter School has submitted a charter revision request to relocate the school to the Buffalo Public School District for the following reasons:

- Over 80% of the school's student population resides in the City of Buffalo and rely on public transportation to travel to school
- Students travel for up to two hours to get to school because of the current location of the school and the bus routes
- Limited bus schedule does not allow students to stay after school unless they can arrange for a ride
- Parents have difficulty participating in school activities because of the current location of the school
- The new location is close to medical and health care facilities in which students will be able to participate in internships and job shadowing programs, etc., which are directly related to the school-to-work focus of the school.

A copy of the resolution of the Board of Trustees approving the relocation of the school and the letter to the Department explaining the reasons for the relocation are attached.

The public hearing concerning this proposed charter revision is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, March 30, 2011. At the April 4-5, 2011 meeting of the Board of Regents Department staff will provide the Board of Regents with any comments made or submitted at the hearing by members of the public or by the Buffalo Board of Education.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposed revised charter: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will permit the charter school to 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) granting this application would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents approves the revision to the initial charter of the Health Sciences Charter School, and the provisional charter is amended accordingly.

The Regents action on the Health Sciences Charter School is effective immediately.

Attachment



Board of Trustees Resolution

Approving Request for Charter Revision and Relocation to Buffalo Public School District

WHEREAS, the Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees deems it desirable and in the best interest of the students, families, and school to relocate the school to the Buffalo Public School District from the Ken-Ton School District for the beginning of the 2011-12 school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AND MOVED by Marsha Jackson, Ph.D. and seconded by Cynthia A. Schwartz, with unanimous approval from Board of Trustee member's Michael J. Faso, Thomas A. Fentner, Michael J. Moley, David A. Palmer, John Gillespie, M.D., Bharat Kohli, M.D., Melva D. Visher, Marsha D. Jackson, Ph.D. and Cynthia A. Schwartz to submit a request for charter revision to the New York State Education Department regarding relocation of the school to the Buffalo Public School District.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Board President, Board Secretary and Director of Finance and Administration aggressively identify a suitable learning environment within the Buffalo Public School District that is not only safe but will provide transportation options for our students to house the school either on a transitional or permanent basis. These said individuals are hereby authorized, directed and empowered to execute, for and on behalf of the Health Sciences Charter School and in its name, any and all documents required to relocate the school for the 2011-12 school year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Palmer", is written over a horizontal line.

David A. Palmer
President, Board of Trustees

December 9, 2010



March 4, 2011

Ms. Sally Bachofer, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Innovative School Models
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12242

Re: Request for Charter Revision

Dear Ms. Bachofer,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Health Sciences Charter School (HSCS), it is my sincere pleasure to respectfully submit this request for a Charter Revision. Based on the needs of our students and their families in the school's first year of operation, the Board has unanimously voted to relocate the HSCS to 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, New York, 14209, which is located in the Buffalo Public School District. The relocation of the HSCS to another district is the only change requested by the Board. Our educational plan remains the same, as do all other elements of the Charter granted by the Board of Regents on July 28, 2009.

On page 2 of the current Charter, Section 1.4 Location, states "The Charter School shall be located at a site within the school district of location identified in the application." The school district identified in the application is the Kenmore Tonawanda School District. The HSCS is currently located at 169 Sheridan Parkside Drive in the Town of Tonawanda.

There are numerous reasons for the proposed relocation of the school to the Buffalo Public School District. Over 80% of the HSCS student population resides within the City of Buffalo and rely on public transportation to travel to school. Due to the current NFTA bus routes and location of the HSCS building, the commute to and from school may consist of a lengthy walk, take up to two hours and many students are required to transfer two or three times. The ride home is based on a very limited schedule that does not allow students to stay after school unless a ride is provided for them. Many of the City students' families do not have access to a car, limiting the opportunities they can pursue, and services they can utilize. Parents have expressed they would participate in activities at the school if it were in a more convenient and familiar location. Family support and involvement is an integral component in the personal and academic growth of our students.

The new location will address all the building and programmatic requirements outlined in the Charter. It will also provide students that reside within the City of Buffalo improved access to transportation, after school activities, enrichment opportunities and shorter proximity to local medical facilities. The school-to-work focus of the HSCS, including MASH Camps, job shadowing, service learning, and student internships is dependent upon the access students have to area hospitals, most of which are located in the City. The new facility will address a number of issues outlined above, including transportation and proximity to health care institutions. An NFTA stop is located directly in front of the building, and is off of a number of direct bus routes, minimizing the travel time for a majority of the students. Originally a school building, the new facility was designed by the renowned architects E.B. Green and Wicks and is listed on the local historic register. This building will be completely restored through a four-phased approach over a five to seven year period and will invest millions of dollars into the Buffalo economy as well as provide students with an exceptional learning environment that both

honors the area's history and prepares them for their future. The HSCS will enter into a lease agreement with the developer with an option to buy.

The Board does not anticipate this request will adversely impact students from eight area school districts currently attending the HSCS, as well as potential future students. Relocation of the school complements the HSCS mission, "to provide high-school age youth in Western New York, particularly those students within the City of Buffalo, with academically challenging learning environments that prepare them to communicate effectively, think and reason critically, value diversity, engage in service learning, pursue academic excellence, and obtain sustainable and quality careers in the health sciences industry." (p.11 Charter Application). Additionally, Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. James Williams, has met with HSCS administration and is aware of this request.

Please know the contact person for this request is Ted Kachris, Director of Business and Administrative Services, telephone-(716) 402-1872 x 117, email-tkachris@healthsciencescharterschool.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David A. Palmer
President, Board of Trustees