



Charter Schools Institute

The State University of New York

SUNY Board Approves Applications to Establish Five New York City Area Charter Schools

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Albany - Upon recommendation of the Charter Schools Institute and the Committee on Charter Schools of the State University of New York Board of Trustees, the full Board of Trustees today voted to approve applications to establish five new charter schools: Brooklyn Prospect Charter School (Brooklyn); Excellence Charter School for Girls (Brooklyn); Leadership Preparatory Brownsville Charter School (Brooklyn); Leadership Preparatory East New York Charter School (Brooklyn); and Leadership Preparatory Flatbush Charter School (Brooklyn).

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 initially set a cap of 100 charter schools; a cap that was met in January of 2006. In April of 2007, the New York State Legislature voted to raise the cap to 200 charter schools, effective July 1, 2007, as part of the 2007-08 budget process. Today's action brings the total number of new charter schools approved by the State University Trustees since the cap raise to 15.

- **Brooklyn Prospect Charter School:** Brooklyn Prospect will open in August of 2009 serving 88 students in 6th grade, growing to serve 352 students in grades 6-9 during the term of its charter. Proposed location is New York City Community School District (NYC CSD) 15 (Brooklyn).

The mission of the proposed charter school is to prepare students for success in the global community by having them participate in a challenging academic curriculum and by immersing them in a culture based upon the core commitments of the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Middle Years Program and, in subsequent charter terms, its Diploma Programme: embracing diversity; recruiting high quality teachers; focusing on success for all students; and academic preparation with a global focus. Ultimately, the founding team envisions a 6th through 12th grade school.

- **Excellence Charter School for Girls:** Excellence Girls will open in August 2009 serving 116 Kindergarten and 1st grade students in its first year, growing to serve 272 students in Kindergarten through 4th grade during the term of its charter. Proposed location is NYC CSD 16 (Brooklyn).

The mission of the proposed charter school is to prepare students to excel in demanding, college-preparatory high schools and colleges and to contribute to their communities as leaders. Ultimately, the founding team envisions a Kindergarten through 8th grade school.

The school will be managed by Uncommon Schools, Inc. (“USI”), a nonprofit charter management organization.

- **Three Leadership Preparatory Charter Schools:** Three Leadership Preparatory Charter Schools, to be located in Brooklyn, were submitted by the same applicant and founding team. All three schools will partner with the non-profit charter management organization, Uncommon Schools, Inc.

The mission of the proposed charter schools is to prepare students to excel in demanding, college-prep high schools and colleges and to contribute to their communities as leaders. Ultimately, the founders envision a Kindergarten through 8th grade school in each of the communities. All of the schools would be managed by USI, which supports four high performing charter schools authorized by the State University Trustees in New York City and Rochester and plans to open one school in Troy next year.

- **Leadership Preparatory East New York Charter School:** Proposed location is NYC CSD 19 (Brooklyn) with a planned opening in fall of 2009. The school will serve 116 students in Kindergarten through 1st grade in its initial year, growing to serve 272 students in Kindergarten through 4th grade at the end of its initial charter term.
- **Leadership Preparatory Flatbush Charter School:** Proposed location is NYC CSD 17 (Brooklyn) with a planned opening in fall of 2010. The school will serve 116 students in Kindergarten through 1st grade in its initial year, growing to serve 223 students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade at the end of its initial charter term.
- **Leadership Preparatory Brownsville Charter School:** Proposed location is NYC CSD 23 (Brooklyn) with a planned opening in fall of 2010. The school will serve 116 students in Kindergarten through 1st grade in its initial year, growing to serve 223 students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade at the end of its initial charter term.

All applications received by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on behalf of the State University Trustees undergo a rigorous and thorough review not only by Institute staff but by a panel of nationally renowned experts from the fields of education and other related areas, representing the charter and traditional school arenas. Pursuant to its review protocols, the Institute interviews the lead applicant and founding trustees for all submitted applications. Those applications the Institute considers moving forward—based on staff review, feedback from the external expert panels and the personal interview—move into the Request for Amendment (RFA) phase of the Institute’s review process. In this phase, the Institute makes very specific requests for amendments to the application to ensure its clarity, and educational, fiscal and legal soundness. In addition, for applicants proposing to contract with a management organization, the Institute conducts its own due diligence regarding the management organization in terms of its capacity to provide the proposed services, including its fiscal and organizational soundness. If an application remains in the review process through the RFA phase, a second interview of the lead applicant and school’s proposed board of trustees is then conducted by one or more members of the State University Trustees’ Committee on Charter Schools.

There are currently 96 charter schools operating in New York State. Of those 96 schools, 43 were authorized by the State University Trustees. A recent Institute analysis of the 2006-07 state exams revealed that 77 percent of SUNY-authorized charter schools outperformed their local districts on the

State exam in mathematics, and 70.5 percent outperformed their local districts on the State exam in English Language Arts.

In making its recommendation for the approval of these applications to the State University Trustees, the Institute prepared a detailed Summary of Findings and Recommendations document that thoroughly describes each school. This document is available at: www.newyorkcharters.org. Additional details about SUNY's application review process are available on the Institute's website at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/openAppKit.htm>.

The Charter Schools Institute was created by the State University Trustees to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities under the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998. Guided by the rigorous standards set by the State University Trustees, the Institute's oversight of SUNY-authorized charter schools is comprehensive, including: acceptance and evaluation of new school charter applications; ongoing oversight and evaluation of all charter schools subsequently authorized by SUNY; reporting to the public on each school's performance and progress; and conducting a comprehensive evaluation when a school applies to renew its charter.

The State University Trustees and the Charter Schools Institute were featured in a recent United States Department of Education guide on high quality charter authorizing, *Supporting Charter School Excellence Through Quality Authorizing*. SUNY was nominated and selected after a rigorous review process—chosen from over 800 charter authorizers nationally—and is one of only eight charter authorizers profiled.