



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

SUNY Authorizing Recognized as International Best Practice

SUNY's work as a charter school authorizer was identified as an international best practice in a new online toolkit developed by the CfBT Education Trust and the World Bank. The toolkit aims to promote public and private partnerships to support quality education. The beta version of the toolkit, found at:



The SUNY case study, authored by CfBT Senior Consultant Laura Lewis (complete with European spelling preferences!), was based on a review of Institute materials and staff interviews.

www.cfbt.com/epsetoolkit/home.aspx, includes a case study detailing SUNY's new school approval process, strategies for oversight and criteria for schools to earn charter renewal. The toolkit was unveiled at the 2011 UKFIET (UK Forum for International Education and Technology). "It was an honor to be included in this project and another great opportunity to share what we have learned with others," said Institute Interim Executive Director Susan Miller Barker.

SUNY Wins Two NACSA Grants



SUNY was honored to receive both a planning and implementation grant from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) *Fund for Authorizing Excellence*. A competitive grant process, the Fund represents NACSA's commitment to support authorizers in improving their practice and advancing the overall charter school environment. SUNY's planning and implementation grants support the Institute's efforts to develop high quality authorizing policies and practices that specifically address the replication of existing, successful schools. "SUNY continues to raise the quality bar for charter school authorizers," said NACSA President and CEO Greg Richmond. "SUNY's approach to replication, focusing on academic rigor and policy-based practice, is consistent with NACSA's Principles and Standards and with SUNY's position as a model authorizer." SUNY has pledged to broadly share the outcomes of this work. [See details inside \(Raising the Bar, page 2\) about SUNY's progress to date.](#)

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Raising the Bar: SUNY and Charter School Replication

The July 2011 issue of Charter Facts (<http://www.newyorkcharters.org/pubsPubs.htm>) featured SUNY's highly regarded process for reviewing applications to establish new charter schools. For the past several months, staff from the SUNY Charter Schools Institute have been working on a significant project to explore the possibility of a streamlined review process for qualified applicants seeking to replicate an existing, successful school model, i.e., charter school replication. The project is driven by SUNY's desire to explore efficiencies without sacrificing the rigor or quality for which SUNY authorizing is well-known. Notably, this process would be an addition to, not a replacement of, SUNY's award-winning application review process. The effort began in response to an identified need—demand for more high quality charter school seats—and grew to a project supported by two national grants and featured at a national conference. As the Institute continues to make progress, we wanted to share our story with all of you. As always, we welcome your feedback at: charters@suny.edu.

SUNY is the largest University-based charter school authorizer in the country with 102 charter schools in operation or approved to open that this year serve nearly 30,000 New York State students. On average SUNY charter schools outperform their charter school peers on state assessments and SUNY is known for taking action to close schools when they underperform.

Identifying the Need

Despite steady growth in the number of authorized schools, demand from New York State families for more seats in SUNY authorized charter schools has far outpaced the rate at which new schools are opening. There are now nearly 60,000 families on waiting lists for admission to SUNY charter schools this year alone. "We have a responsibility to continually evaluate and improve our authorizing practices," said Institute Interim Executive Director Susan Miller Barker. "Part of that effort includes working to be responsive to the needs of New York State families."

SUNY's new school approval process is intentionally one of the most rigorous in the country. As described in the April 2011 issue of *Charter Facts*, SUNY believes that its greater attention to detail during the application phase results in a better blueprint for successful applicants to start their schools, and greater autonomies for schools once open. "Simply opening up the floodgates to approve more schools quickly, before they were ready, was not

an answer for SUNY," emphasized Miller Barker. "But we did spend time thinking about where we could add efficiencies to the current process that could help us begin to better meet demand."

Demand Meets Opportunity

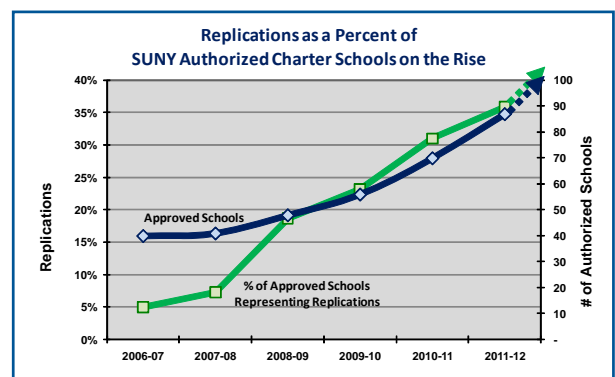
Efficiencies for first time applicants that would not sacrifice quality were not easily found. "After much discussion, our focus quickly turned to replication schools," said Institute Director of Applications Jason Sarsfield. "Schools that, by design, share the same academic program, same curriculum, same organizational structure, similar school culture and supports for students and teachers."

"We realized that when we are considering an application based on an existing, successful school, there have to be ways that we can recognize applicants for that success, refine our process and perhaps increase the rate at which we could recommend approval of replication schools," added Sarsfield. "Ideally, those efficiencies would also allow us to spend more time working with new, first-time applicants, who would continue to apply via our traditional process; efforts that allow us to support new ideas, new innovations."

SUNY's school portfolio already includes 35 'replications.' Students in these schools perform well. In fact, among the top 10 highest performing SUNY authorized charter schools on the 2010-11 state exams in mathematics and English language arts are three sets of 'original' schools and their subsequent replications; schools part of the Icahn Charter School network, and schools that partner with Success Charter Network, Inc. and Uncommon Schools, Inc.

However, each one of the replication schools opened to date earned its charter in largely the same manner as the original school after which it was modeled. Applicants were required to submit the same application as new school applicants and applications were reviewed and approved according to the same timeline and process—

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SUNY approved its first charter schools in 1999 and its first replication school six years later in 2005. As depicted above, approved replications of existing schools have grown significantly.

although with added consideration of the academic performance of the existing school(s). Monitoring and renewal for replication schools are also largely the same as for new schools.

There were several other factors that supported SUNY's decision to focus on replication:

- SUNY has a comparatively large number of available charters left to award, 113 charters from the May 2010 legislative allocation, plus 6 charters from a previous legislative allocation in 2007. "This meant that we could entertain an increased focus on replication without taking away opportunities from new, single school applicants to get their first charter," said Sarsfield.
- There are a growing number of existing charter schools that have both demonstrated strong student achievement results and have expressed a desire to replicate; schools that partner with a management organization as well as independent charter schools. "This group of schools also provides us with an important opportunity to better identify and share

what works on the ground with the broader public education community," noted Sarsfield.

- The New York regulatory environment in allows multiple paths to replication.

The challenge was that SUNY's current, award-winning process for approving new schools did not efficiently scale beyond the approval of one or two replications at a time. As noted above, the process does not reflect the fact that these applicants already have a proven program that has met SUNY standards. Nor is it tailored to address some of the capacity questions that must be considered when a network of schools proposes to expand beyond an initial, small number of approved replications.

Planning for a New Approach

"When we first came together to talk about a differentiated approach to authorizing and a new focus on replication, the list of issues to address was long," said Sarsfield. Key questions included:

- What are the different considerations in replicating schools that are part of a



Institute Interim Executive Director Susan Miller Barker welcomes participants to Policy Matters: A SUNY Conference on Charter School Replication. See conference details on page 5.

network as opposed to independent schools seeking to replicate?

- Should there be a "ticket to enter" that would qualify schools for an expedited application review process?
- Is there such a thing as too much growth if all schools in a network or under one board meet expectations?
- How does the definition of organizational capacity change when considering the addition of the fifth replication school versus the tenth?
- What does sufficient human capital and fiscal capacity look like when you are consider adding the fifth school versus the tenth?

- Continued, see *RAISING THE BAR*, p. 5

A New Institute Look: Courtesy of The Power of SUNY

The SUNY Charter Schools Institute is transitioning to a new logo, shown at right as part of the re-branding of the State University of New York. The new look reflects the Institute's commitment to the *Power of SUNY* University-wide strategic plan. The plan itself is far-reaching and sets key priorities for the SUNY system (download SUNY's strategic plan at: www.suny.edu/powerofsuny/).

The plan goal most central to the Institute's work is SUNY's commitment to take a leadership role in creating a Seamless Education Pipeline for New Yorkers that extends from birth to retirement, to: "lead every student, no matter how vulnerable, through the education system and into a career in the 21st century workforce." There are many strategies underway to achieve this goal, including: focus on SUNY's considerable role in preparing New York teachers, working to further strengthen the teacher preparation programs at 17 SUNY colleges and universities statewide; partnerships between SUNY college campuses and the K-12 public district and charter schools nearest to them; and, the recent efforts of SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher and Senior Vice Chancellor Johanna Duncan-Poitier to engage entire communities in support of the pipeline. Clearly, this goal closely aligns with the priorities and mission of SUNY's work as a charter school authorizer. The majority of the 102 charter schools authorized by SUNY to date utilize a student-centered, college-preparatory model designed to bring at-risk students to the high levels of academic and personal achievement, and many actively engage community-based organizations and leaders to support their work. "We absolutely see the nearly 30,000 students in SUNY authorized charter schools today as possible future students of SUNY colleges and universities tomorrow," said Susan Miller Barker, Institute Interim Executive Director. "We look forward to new opportunities to work with the broader SUNY system in support of strategic plan goals." *See details inside (SUTEC, p. 4) about the partnership beginning between SUNY Authorized Charter Schools and SUNY college student teachers.*



SUNY Urban Teacher Education Center (SUTEC) Begins Placements in the Charter Classroom

SUNY College Students Complete their Student Teaching Assignment in SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

The New York City based SUNY Urban Teacher Education Center (SUTEC) was created to support SUNY's 17 colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs secure positive student teaching experiences for their students in an urban setting. "The goal is to provide experiences that will prepare prospective teachers to become competent and confident professionals in urban, multicultural environments," said SUTEC Director Natalie Lukas. While the historic focus of the program has been on placing student teachers in district schools, a pilot effort launched last year by SUTEC to bring SUNY college students into SUNY authorized charter schools is expanding.

Both the Bronx Charter School for Excellence and the Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem hosted SUNY student teachers last year and will do so again this year. "This was really a positive experience all the way around," said Bronx Excellence Head of School Charlene Reid. "It was a good professional development opportunity for my teachers to work with the students and it was a pleasure for me to welcome students into the school community who shared my passion for teaching as a life-long career." Reid said she was pleased with the preparedness level of the students and with their eagerness to learn. "We actually offered one of the student teachers a full-time job upon graduation. The SUTEC program is now another recruiting resource for me."

SUTEC also provides an academic center for scholarship and research on urban education. "We host a weekly seminar and conduct symposia on urban education themes," added Lukas. In addition to SUTEC, each student teacher is supported by a field supervisor hired by their home campus.



Dr. Jerusalem Rivera-Wilson, Senior Faculty Associate and Director of Clinical Training and Field Experiences at the University at Albany, toured Icahn 2 Charter School this summer with Ms. Lukas and Institute Director of Public Affairs Cyndi Proctor. "We were welcomed at the door by students and toured every classroom with the school principal where we had the opportunity to engage teachers and students in a dialogue about what they were learning, plans for an upcoming school play, and even recent student successes," said Rivera-Wilson. "We saw a school environment where I believe that SUNY college students will be supported and valued and where the school leadership and teaching staff are life-long learners committed to sharing their experiences with new teachers." Icahn 2 is hosting its first student teachers this year.

"SUTEC provides critical support to SUNY's education programs and the K-12 schools they work with," said Jeffrey Litt, Superintendent of the Icahn Charter Schools. "We cannot over-emphasize the importance of its work. SUTEC gives us a fresh perspective into an ever-changing educational system." Icahn Charter School 2 Principal Brenda Carrasquillo stressed the value of student teachers to the school environment. "Student teachers bring energy and enthusiasm, they serve as role models for our students, and they give our teachers an opportunity to support the next generation of teachers."

Eight SUNY authorized charter schools have expressed interest in hosting SUNY student teachers and another fourteen

schools have expressed interest in hiring alumni of the SUTEC program for full-time teaching positions.

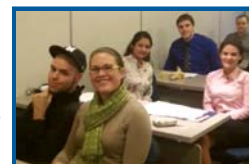
This is a partnership that the Institute hopes will continue to grow. "SUTEC provides a unique bridge between the college classroom and the K-12 public classroom," said Institute Interim Executive Director Susan Miller Barker. "As more student teachers spend time at SUNY authorized charter schools we hope to create a dynamic feedback loop that will undoubtedly bring benefits to all involved."

For more information about bringing SUNY student teachers into your classroom, contact the Institute at: charters@suny.edu.



Above: A SUTEC success story. When she was a student at SUNY Oneonta, Ashley Lorenzo completed a student teaching placement at the Bronx Charter School for Excellence. She made such a positive impression that the school hired her upon graduation! Ms. Lorenzo is shown here engaging her third grade students. Below: SUTEC Director Natalie Lukas with student teachers from multiple SUNY campuses at a weekly professional development

seminar. During this session, held at SUNY Stony Brook's Manhattan campus, students discussed the documentary "Waiting for Superman" and, as they do each week, had an opportunity to share successes and challenges with their peers.



- *RAISING THE BAR (continued)*

- What if one school in a network is under-performing but the rest are excelling, does that mean the network should not grow or grow more slowly?
- What are the different considerations in replicating elementary schools versus middle schools or high schools?

"We knew that these were significant issues to tackle and we also knew that if we wanted to make a recommendation to the SUNY Trustees about replication, that we had to start at the policy level," said Miller Barker. The SUNY Trustees rightly understand that their authorizing work is strong because it is grounded in clear, transparent policy that informs potential applicants, operating schools, and even new Trustees and new Institute staff. As a result, SUNY policies have been widely praised and adopted by authorizers in New York, across the country, and more recently, around the world. "We were committed to approaching this work in replication in a way that would yield similar results," added Miller Barker.

SUNY found a pathway to doing just that via grant support from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). As described on this issue's cover page, SUNY received a \$50,000 planning grant to help support its replication work. The grant timeline began in July and will end in January of 2012. There were several primary project goals made possible by the grant support:

- Securing a project consultant to work with Institute staff and the SUNY Trustees to ensure that overall project goals were met.
- Hosting a two-day scholarly conference: *Policy Matters: a SUNY Conference on Charter School Replication* (please see conference highlights in the article to the right);
- Developing a draft policy document specific to replication for consideration by the SUNY Trustees; and

- *Continued, see RAISING THE BAR, p. 8*

Conference Highlights

Policy Matters: A SUNY Conference on Charter School Replication

Held July 26-27, 2011 at the SUNY Global Center in New York City

SUNY's two-day scholarly conference, *Policy Matters: A SUNY Conference on Charter School Replication*, was a vital component of the Institute's work on charter school replication. The conference brought together a national audience and gave Institute staff an opportunity to test assumptions, debate priorities, and seek input on challenging questions.

Included among the more than 70 participants were representatives from: the NYS Education Department; the NYC Department of Education; charter school authorizers from Washington D.C., Chicago, Michigan and Minneapolis; content experts; policy experts; researchers; philanthropic organizations; the NYC Charter School Center and the New York State Charter School Association. Katie Campos, NYS Assistant Secretary for Education, joined the group on one of her first official days in office. SUNY Trustees Dr. Pedro Noguera, Ken O'Brien and Eunice Lewin and National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Board Chair and NewSchools Venture Fund Managing Partner Jim Peyser made key remarks and served as active participants. The Institute extends a special thanks to all who helped to make the event such a success.

By way of a brief recap, the conference began with a presentation of an Environmental Scan prepared by SUNY's project consultants, Bryan Hassel, Julie Kowal and Joe Ableidinger from the education policy and consulting firm Public Impact. The report provided context on charter growth in New York and nationally; the main challenges associated with expansion; and lessons learned from the education, non-profit and corporate sectors about growth and replication. Attendees heard the school perspective from Marilyn Calo, Founding Principal of the Family Life Academy Charter School, and Morty Ballen, CEO and Founder of Explore Schools, who both recently applied to SUNY to replicate schools under the current process. Several school leaders and board members of SUNY authorized charter schools participated including those from the Ichan network of schools, Bronx Charter School for Excellence and Green Dot Charter High School. Also part of day one were presentations by Institute Director for Applications Jason Sarsfield on the Institute's work to date and by Institute Vice President and General Counsel Ralph Rossi on the New York Charter Schools Act and the types of replication possible under the law.

Day two was devoted to working groups charged with tackling key questions in the respective areas of application review, the charter contract, oversight and renewal and fiscal soundness. SUNY appointed content experts to work alongside Institute staff as leads for each group: Education Consultant and Founding President and CEO of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools Nelson Smith (application process); Robin Lake, Associate Director, Center on Reinventing Public Education (ongoing evaluation and renewal); Kevin Quinn, Partner, Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna LLC (charter agreements/contracts); and Jim Ford, Education Consultant and former Director of Charter School Programs at the Raza Development Fund (fiscal soundness).

Key conference documents and links to all presentations are available on the Institute's website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/conference/PolicyMatters.htm. Importantly, this site will be a key tool in our efforts to keep you up-to-date on our progress. We encourage you to visit the website and SUNY's YouTube channel to take part in the dynamic conversation.



See conference highlights on the Institute's YouTube™ Channel:
SUNYCharterSchools

SUNY Authorizing: A look at the Numbers

SUNY is the largest charter school authorizer in New York State and the largest University-based charter school authorizer in the country. There are currently 102 SUNY authorized charter schools in operation or approved to open across New York State: 81 in and around New York City; 11 in the Capital District ; and 10 in Western/Central New York.

SUNY Authorized Charter Schools Statewide

	City/Area	School	Grades Offered	Chartered Enrollment	Planned Grades (current charter term)	
Capital District	Albany	Achievement Academy Charter School	5-8	260	5-8	
		Albany Community Charter School	K-5	345	K-5	
		Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls	9-11	225	9-12	
		Albany Preparatory Charter School	5-8	225	5-8	
		Brighter Choice Charter School Middle School for Boys	5-6	112	5-8	
		Brighter Choice Charter School Middle School for Girls	5-6	112	5-8	
		Green Tech High Charter School	9-12	360	9-12	
		Henry Johnson Charter School	K-4	387	K-4	
		KIPP Tech Valley Charter School	5-8	300	5-8	
		True North Troy Preparatory Charter School	K, 5-7	217	K, 5-7	
Western / Central	Troy	Ark Community Charter School	K-6	200	K-6	
		Buffalo	Buffalo United Charter School	K-8	680	K-8
	Buffalo	King Center Charter School	K-6	176	K-7	
		Oracle Charter School	9-12	360	9-12	
		South Buffalo Charter School	K-8	800	K-8	
		Tapestry Charter School	K-12	670	K-12	
		Ithaca	New Roots Charter School	9-12	225	9-12
		Rochester	Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School	K-8	400	K-8
			True North Rochester Prep. Charter School	K-2, 5-8	514	K-8
		New York City / Long Island	Rochester	True North Rochester Prep. Charter School - West Campus	5	78
University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men	7-9			225	7-12	
Bronx	Bronx Charter School for Better Learning		K-5	342	K-5	
	Bronx Charter School for Excellence		K-5	436	K-5	
	Bronx Preparatory Charter School		5-12	709	5-12	
	Bronx Success Academy Charter School 1		K-2	249	K-4	
	Bronx Success Academy Charter School 2		K-2	249	K-4	
	<i>Boys Preparatory Charter School¹</i>		K-1	132	K-5	
	<i>Children's Aid Society Charter School¹</i>		K-1	120	K-5	
	Icahn Charter School 1		K-8	324	K-8	
	Icahn Charter School 2		K-6	252	K-5	
	Icahn Charter School 3		K-5	216	K-5	
	Icahn Charter School 4		K-4	180	K-5	
	Icahn Charter School 5		K-2	108	K-4	
	<i>Icahn Charter School 6</i>		K-2	108	K-5	
	<i>Icahn Charter School 7</i>		K-2	108	K-5	
	Family Life Academy Charter School		K-8	441	K-8	
	<i>Family Life Academy Charter School II¹</i>		K-1	100	K-5	
	Girls Prep Charter School of the Bronx		K-3	280	K-4	
	Grand Concourse Academy Charter School		K-5	356	K-5	
	Green Dot New York Charter School	9-12	420	9-12		
	<i>Heketi Community Charter School¹</i>	K-1	88	K-5		
New Visions Charter High School for Adv. Math & Science	9	125	9-12			
New Visions Charter High School for Humanities	9	125	9-12			
<i>ROADS Charter School 2²</i>	9	150	9-12			
<i>Tech International Charter School</i>	6	88	6-8			
Brooklyn	<i>Achievement First Aspire¹ Charter School</i>	K-1	166	K-5		
	Achievement First Apollo Charter School	K-2	249	K-3, 5		

City/Area	School	Grades Offered	Chartered Enrollment	Planned Grades (current charter term)
	Achievement First Brownsville Charter School	K-4	416	K-5
	Achievement First-Bushwick Charter School	K-9	801	K-11
	Bedford Stuyvesant Collegiate Charter School	5-8	300	5-9
	<i>Beginning with Children II Charter School¹</i>	K-1	100	K-5
	Brooklyn Dreams Charter School	K-4	248	K-6
	Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School	5-6	148	5-8
	Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School	K-8	704	K-8
	Brooklyn Prospect Charter School	6-8	264	6-9
	Brooklyn Success Academy Charter School 1	K-1	188	K-5
	<i>Brooklyn Success Academy Charter School 2¹</i>	K-1	188	K-5
	<i>Brooklyn Success Academy Charter School 3¹</i>	K-1	188	K-5
	<i>Brooklyn Success Academy Charter School 4¹</i>	K-1	188	K-5
	Brownsville Collegiate Charter School	5-8	240	5-9
	<i>Canarsie Ascend Charter School¹</i>	K-1	208	K-5
	Community Partnership Charter School	K-7	385	K-7
	Excellence Boys Charter School of Bed Stuy	K-8	484	K-10
	Excellence Girls Charter School	K-3	313	K-4
	Explore Excel Charter School	K-3	224	K-7
	<i>Explore Exceed Charter School¹</i>	K-2	168	K-6
	Invictus Preparatory Charter School	5	90	5-8
	Kings Collegiate Charter School	5-8	274	5-9
	Leadership Preparatory Bed Stuy Charter School	K-6	489	K-8
	Leadership Preparatory Brownsville Charter School	K-3	286	K-4
	Leadership Preparatory Ocean Hill Charter School	K-2	232	K-4
	<i>Leadership Preparatory Charter School 4¹</i>	K-1	116	K-3
	New Hope Academy Charter School	K-3	240	K-5
	Ocean Hill Collegiate Charter School	5-6	148	5-8
	<i>ROADS Charter School 1¹</i>	9	150	9-12
	UFT Charter School	K-12	1,074	K-12
Manhattan	Amber Charter School	K-5	425	K-5
	Broome Street Academy Charter High School	9	110	9-12
	East Harlem Scholars Academy Charter School	K-1	100	K-5
	Girls Preparatory Charter School of New York	K-7	412	K-8
	Harbor Science and Arts Charter School	K-8	228	K-8
	Harlem Prep Charter School	K-5	270	K-5
	Harlem Link Charter School	K-5	320	K-5
	Harlem Success Academy Charter School 2	K-4	580	K-4
	Harlem Success Academy Charter School 3	K-4	531	K-4
	Harlem Success Academy Charter School 4	K-4	473	K-4
	Harlem Success Academy Charter School 5	K-2	249	K-4
	Harlem Village Academy Charter School	5-12	344	5-12
	Harlem Village Academy Leadership Charter School	5-12	362	5-12
	Innovate Manhattan Charter School	6-7	132	6-8
	KIPP S.T.A.R. College Prep Charter School	K, 5-12	623	5-12
	<i>Manhattan Charter School II¹</i>	K-1	96	K-5
	Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem	K-5	270	K-5
	Upper West Success Academy Charter School	K-1	188	K-5
Queens	Academy of the City Charter School	K-1	104	K-5
	<i>Central Queens Academy Charter School¹</i>	5	110	5-8
	Merrick Academy - Queens Public Charter School	K-6	540	K-6
	Our World Neighborhood Charter School	K-8	700	K-8
Staten Island	New World Preparatory Charter School	6-7	249	6-8
Hempstead	The Academy Charter School	K-4	288	K-5
Roosevelt	Roosevelt Children's Academy Charter School	K-8	659	K-8
Wainscott	Child Development Center of the Hamptons	K-5	105	K-5

¹ School scheduled to open in the fall of 2012; planned enrollment and grade information is shown.

² School scheduled to open in the fall of 2013; planned enrollment and grade information is shown.

- *RAISING THE BAR (continued)*

- Developing a plan for a second phase of the project; creation of practices and practice documents to support the new policies, including: a replication-specific application, monitoring protocols, and renewal benchmarks.

“Now four months in, we have made remarkable progress on our grant goals and our overall project thanks to the hard work of Institute staff and the tremendous success of our conference,” said Miller Barker. A draft version of the replication specific policy document was shared with the SUNY Trustees’ Education Committee at its meeting in September and a plan was also completed to develop required practice documents. “We are still hard at work finalizing the language of the policy draft,” explained Miller Barker. “We plan to send the next version of the document out to all conference attendees to solicit their feedback. We anticipate presenting the policies to the SUNY Trustees for adoption in January.”

Policy Highlights

While the *Policies of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York for the Replication of SUNY Authorized Charter Schools* are still in draft form, there are a number of key conclusions that the Institute believes will be featured in the final document:

- A clarifying statement to ensure all readers understand that SUNY’s existing new school approval process will continue to exist for applicants new to SUNY and for first-time replications or

proposed replications of schools or networks of schools with insufficient data or a mixed academic record.

- With respect to replication, the Institute will continue to maintain its rigorous quality standards. The Institute is charged with recommending only those applications it deems to have a high likelihood of improving student learning and academic achievement.
- An "expedited" or streamlined application process for replication applicants who can demonstrate that they have met specific academic performance criteria. This is the “ticket to enter” discussed above. Applicants may be deemed eligible to enter an expedited application process if they have compiled a strong and compelling record of meeting or nearly meeting the original school's accountability plan goals (or similar standards for one or more existing schools not authorized by SUNY). “We realized that the availability of the expedited process was directly tied to our comfort level with the quality of the program being replicated,” explained Sarsfield. “This was a process designed to increase the rate at which the strongest charter schools can grow. To do that, we felt we needed clear criteria for the demonstrated success of the program to be replicated.”
- An increased focus on replication means a likely increase in the numbers of students overseen by one board, one network, or one charter management organization. As a result, the Institute will conduct a multilayered due-diligence review by requiring applicants

to submit a detailed business plan as part of their application, in addition to the academic, legal, fiscal and human resources review currently conducted. The Institute will further develop and refine its existing due diligence protocols and update that information on a regular basis in order to mitigate the risks associated with replication.

- A recommendation that every school will continue to have an individual academic accountability plan and will continue to be assessed on its own achievement data. “There was some discussion at the conference about evaluating schools on a network level, or using some type of sampling for schools that fell under the same board of trustees,” said Sarsfield. “However, we believe that regardless of the corporate or organizational structure, each one of these schools is taking on the responsibility of educating New York State children and we need to be able to hold each school accountable for the promises made to the students it serves.” As noted above, the Institute will also evaluate the effectiveness and capacity of networks, charter management organizations and boards as part of its due-diligence process.

Moving Forward

There are many more details in the draft policy document than could be highlighted here. Please continue to visit the Institute’s website at: www.newyorkcharters.org/conference/PolicyMatters.htm to follow SUNY’s progress. Again, your comments are welcome at: charters@suny.edu.

The State University of New York and Charter Schools

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 grants the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York the power to authorize 230 charters for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools. The Charter Schools Institute was created by the SUNY Trustees in February 1999 to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act. Guided by the rigorous standards of the SUNY Trustees, the Institute’s oversight of SUNY authorized charter schools is comprehensive, including: evaluating initial applications to establish new charter schools; ongoing oversight and evaluation of approved schools; conducting a comprehensive evaluation when a school applies to renew its charter; and reporting to the school and the public on each school’s performance and progress.

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