



Charter Schools Institute  
*The State University of New York*

# Summary of Findings and Recommendations

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*Proposal to establish:  
Beginning with Children Charter School II*

June 5, 2011

## **Executive Summary**

The proposal to establish the Beginning with Children Charter School II (“Beginning with Children II”) was submitted to the Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) by lead applicant George Flowers on February 28, 2011 in response to the Institute’s Request for Proposals (“RFP”) that was released on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York (the “SUNY Trustees”) on January 3, 2011.

Beginning with Children II seeks to have its students “achieve academic excellence and are prepared to succeed in top performing high schools and colleges.” The board seeks to occupy facility space provided by the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) located in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 14 (Brooklyn). The school would open in the fall of 2012 with 100 students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade and would add 50 students and one grade each year thereafter through the initial charter period. Beginning with Children II would reach its enrollment capacity of 250 students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the final year of the proposed charter period and envisions ultimately expanding through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in a subsequent charter period, if granted. The school would also enroll students to fill vacancies as they arise in all grades, otherwise known as “backfilling,” in order to serve as many students as possible.

The board of trustees of the school would contract with the Beginning with Children Foundation (the “Foundation”), a New York based non-profit organization, for overall charter management services. The Foundation currently manages two other charters schools, the Beginning with Children Charter School (authorized by the NYCDOE) and the Community Partnership Charter School (authorized by the SUNY Trustees). The proposed school would largely be a replication of the two operating schools, each of which has been renewed, with proposed improvements including a new role in support of academic rigor by the Foundation. Student performance data for Beginning with Children Charter School and Community Partnership Charter School is provided below.

Consistent with the May 2010 amendments to the New York Charter Schools Act (the “Act”), the Institute finds: 1) that the proposal for the Beginning with Children II rigorously demonstrates the criteria detailed in the Institute’s RFP including the mandatory criteria set forth in Education Law subdivision 2852(9)(b)(i); 2) that the proposed school has conducted thorough and meaningful public review processes to solicit community input regarding the proposal in accordance with the requirements in the RFP, which in turn conform with Education Law subdivision 2852(9)(b)(ii); 3) the proposal is one that best satisfy the objectives contained within the RFP based on the content of the proposal and its supporting documentation, and is therefore qualified within the meaning of Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(d); and 4) the Institute has scored the proposal pursuant to Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(c), and there are enough charters to be issued by the SUNY Trustees pursuant to the January 2011 RFP to accommodate the proposal and all other applicants that are to be recommended for approval.

Based on the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the charter proposal for the Beginning with Children Charter School II.

## **Background and Description**

While the SUNY Trustees may still award a small number of charters pursuant to its traditional application process, amendments to the Act made additional charters to form new charter school

education corporations available only through an RFP process. The Institute received 25 total proposals to create new charter schools in response to the RFP it issued on January 3, 2011. The current review cycle could legally result in a maximum of 63 new charters approved by the SUNY Trustees, per Education Law subdivision 2852(9), 30 of which reflect charters that were available but not awarded in response to the August 2010 RFP. Two of the current 25 proposals were submitted in response to the expedited timeline provided for in the January 2011 RFP and subsequently approved by the SUNY Trustees at their March 2010 meeting, leaving 61 possible charters to be approved.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the Beginning with Children II proposal including academic, fiscal and legal soundness reviews. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute has met with the applicant, the proposed board of trustees which will oversee the school, other members of the founding team and representatives of the Beginning with Children Foundation. In addition, members of SUNY Trustees' Education, College Readiness and Success Committee had an opportunity to interview the lead applicant and members of the founding school board.

The mission of the Beginning with Children Charter School II is to provide “a nurturing community that fosters a love of learning and the development of character for students in grades K-5. Our students achieve academic excellence and are prepared to succeed in top performing high schools and colleges. BwCCS II students develop and use G.R.I.T. (Good Judgment, Resilience, Integrity, and Teamwork) for personal and community improvement.”

To achieve its mission, the school would implement the following key design elements:

- extended school day with an emphasis on the development of literacy and mathematical skills, devoting at least 50% of the academic time to these subjects;
- unrelenting school culture that fosters a love of learning and the school's core values of G.R.I.T.: Good Judgment, Resilience, Intellect & Integrity, and Teamwork;
- data-driven analysis to inform teaching, curriculum and staff development;
- Staffing model that includes at least two teachers in each classroom for grades K-2 and Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) to support the education of students with disabilities;
- a comprehensive intervention program including Saturday academy, after school tutoring and embedded enrichment and intervention activities to ensure academic success for all students;
- clearly articulated behavioral expectations for children and adults;
- dynamic community partnerships which support enrichment programs that teach students to become lifelong learners and active citizens and provide service learning opportunities;
- parent/guardian involvement at all levels of the school community;
- individualized teacher development plans and relentless coaching towards excellence;  
and
- a partnership with the Beginning with Children Foundation as the school's management organization detailed in an annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by the proposed school board.

Beginning with Children II is modeled after the Beginning with Children School, originally an independent public school developed by the Foundation, founded by Joseph and Carol Reich. Its approach to creating a productive and creative learning environment for at-risk children is based on the theory that data-driven analysis should inform teaching, curriculum and staff development. The Beginning with Children School was created in 1992 prior to the passage of the Charter Schools Act and accepted students by a lottery and was co-located in NYCDOE facility space. The school converted to a charter school in 2001 and has educated over 1000 students in CSD 14 in Brooklyn. In response to a waitlist of over 2,600 students for the Beginning with Children Charter School, the board proposes to locate Beginning with Children II in the same community.

The Foundation is also affiliated with a second school, the SUNY authorized Community Partnership Charter School. The proposed board of Beginning with Children Charter School II plans to incorporate many best practices in place at Community Partnership into the proposed Beginning with Children II school.

The Foundation only recently began to provide full academic support services to the schools it manages. In the past, it had provided financial, real estate, operations and back office services and the leadership team at each school had been responsible for the development and implementation of the academic program.

As a result of student achievement challenges and their strategic growth plan, the Foundation hired a chief academic officer prior to the start of the 2009-10 school year. The chief academic officer is responsible for the development of the overall educational program and the supervision and coaching of school leaders at each school. The Institute has determined that this structure is likely to support the effective implementation of the proposed academic program and leadership structure at Beginning with Children II and the continued implementation of the academic programs in place at Beginning with Children and Community Partnership.

Graduates of the Beginning with Children Charter School have successfully completed high school and are attending colleges of their choice. With the sustained support from the Foundation's Alumni Program, 90 percent of Beginning with Children Charter School's Class of 2007 graduated from high school on time in 2009-10, compared to a citywide four year graduation rate of 59 percent, and notably all of these graduates are currently attending college. The applicant notes that this statistic is even more striking in light of the fact that over 95 percent of these students are African American or Hispanic, and four-year graduation rates in New York City for those groups in 2009 were 54 and 52 percent, respectively.

Student performance data for the Beginning with Children Charter School and Community Partnership Charter School over the last three years is provided below.

2009-10							
Community Partnership Charter School							
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Time Adjusted Percent Proficient <sup>1</sup>	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size <sup>2</sup>	Percentile
ELA	3-5	54.1	43.1	78	55	0.38	47
Math	3-5	65.2	49.6	90.1	55	0.40	51

Beginning with Children Charter School							
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Time Adjusted Percent Proficient	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size	Percentile
ELA	3-8	39.1	37.7	64.3	54.6	-0.44	24
Math	3-8	43.5	49.5	82.3	54.6	-0.60	19

In 2009-10, the most recent year where testing data is available, with 54.1 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 65.2 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Community Partnership exceeded the district of location by 11 and 15.6 percentage point in ELA and math, respectively. In addition, with 55 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed higher than predicted to a small degree when compared to similar schools statewide in both ELA and math, demonstrating Effect Sizes of 0.38 and 0.40, respectively.

With 39.1 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 43.5 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Beginning with Children exceeded the district of location by 1.4 percentage points in ELA and performed 6 percentage points below the district in math. In addition, with 54.6 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed lower than predicted to a small degree when compared to similar schools statewide in ELA, demonstrating Effect Size of -0.44. In math, the school performed lower than expected to a medium degree, demonstrating an Effect Size of -0.60.

<sup>1</sup> In 2009-10, the State Education Department (SED) raised its achievement standard, by increasing the scaled score cut off for proficiency or Level 3 performance on the English language arts and mathematics exams. In order to maintain a consistent standard for determining meeting the absolute and growth measures, the Institute requested that the school report 2009-10 results on these measures using a 650 scaled score cut-off, as SED had used a 650 cut-off in the previous few years. SED then refined the cut score for its own NCLB accountability system. While following the same principle of maintaining year-to-year consistency in cut scores, the state has also taken into account when the two exams were administered in 2010 compared to previous years. As the exams were administered later in the year, students had more learning opportunities prior to the exam. As such, SED set the cut scores slightly higher than 650 in each grade. For the purpose of evaluating the goals' three absolute and growth measures, the Institute has adapted SED's "time-adjusted" cut-offs. In developing the performance summaries for 2009-10, the "time-adjusted" cut offs are used where possible (the absolute and growth measures), while the previously released cut offs are used for all other measures.

<sup>2</sup> Effect Size is a statistical measure calculated by dividing the difference between the actual and predicted outcome by the standard deviation. It reflects the difference between a school's attained and expected performance in each tested grade, relative to other schools with similar free-lunch statistics and tested grades. (The Effect Size for all grades is weighted by the number of students tested in each grade.) The school's overall performance rating is based on the following Effect Size ranges: Above 0.79 - Higher than expected to a large degree; 0.50 to 0.79 - Higher than expected to a medium degree; 0.30 to 0.49 - Higher than expected to a small degree; 0.01 to 0.29 - Slightly higher than expected; -0.29 to -0.01 - Slightly lower than expected; -0.30 to -0.49 - Lower than expected to a small degree; -0.50 to -0.79 - Lower than expected to a medium degree; Below -0.79 - Lower than expected to a large degree.

2008-09						
Community Partnership Charter School						
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size	Percentile
ELA	3-5	77.8	68.9	48.8	0.21	67.5
Math	3-5	96.5	85.6	48.8	0.80	87.5

Beginning with Children Charter School						
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size	Percentile
ELA	3-8	73.1	65.9	52.9	0.00	30
Math	3-8	83.9	79.5	52.9	0.03	27.5

In 2008-09, with 77.8 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 96.5 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Community Partnership exceeded the district of location by 8.9 and 10.9 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively. In addition, with 48.8 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed higher than predicted to a small degree when compared to similar schools statewide in ELA, demonstrating Effect Sizes of 0.21. In math, the school performed better than predicted to a large degree, demonstrating an Effect Size of 0.80

With 73.1 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 83.9 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Beginning with Children exceeded the district of location by 7.2 and 4.4 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively. In addition, with 52.9 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed as predicted when compared to similar schools statewide in ELA, demonstrating no Effect Size. In math, the school performed slightly higher than predicted, demonstrating an Effect Size of 0.03.

2007-08						
Community Partnership Charter School						
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size	Percentile
ELA	3-5	67.2	60.5	53.7	0.00	62.5
Math	3-5	82.6	80.4	53.7	0.15	57.5

Beginning with Children Charter School						
Subject	Testing Grades	School Percent Proficient	District Percent Proficient	Percent Free Lunch	Effect Size	Percentile
ELA	3-8	65.2	54.3	58.6	0.37	32.5
Math	3-8	84.1	71.3	58.6	0.61	42.5

In 2007-08, with 67.2 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 60.6 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Community Partnership exceeded

the district of location by 6.7 and 2.2 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively. In addition, with 53.7 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed as predicted when compared to similar schools statewide in ELA, demonstrating no Effect Size. In math, the school performed higher than expected to a small degree, demonstrating an Effect Size of 0.15.

With 65.2 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in ELA and 84.1 percent of its students performing at or above proficiency in math, Beginning with Children exceeded the district of location by 10.9 and 12.8 percentage points in ELA and math, respectively. In addition, with 58.6 percent of its students eligible for the federal free lunch program, the school performed higher than predicted to a small degree when compared to similar schools statewide in both ELA, demonstrating Effect Size of 0.37. In math, the school performed higher than expected to a medium degree, demonstrating an Effect Size of 0.61.

The proposed school would offer an extended school day from 8:20 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for 172.5 days during the regular school year. The educational program would emphasize the development of literacy and mathematical skills, devoting at least 50% of the academic time to these subjects. The school would implement a balanced literacy approach to teaching reading and writing with layered interventions, while mathematics instruction would be based on TERC's Investigations program. Science, social studies, physical education, art and music would also be part of the core curriculum.

Beginning with Children II would offer a comprehensive intervention program including Saturday academy, after school tutoring and embedded enrichment and intervention activities to ensure academic success of all students. Its staffing model would feature two teachers in each classroom for Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and certified specialist teachers for fine and performing art, music, physical education and science. The founders are committed to providing a full inclusion model for special education students as appropriate. A Child Study Team would be led by a special education coordinator who would be responsible for managing and coordinating the overall special education program to ensure full compliance and the success of students with Individualized Education Programs. A Collaborative Team Teaching model would be implemented to support the education of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

The founders envision the proposed school as a place for adult learning as well as for student learning. The school would be led by a leadership team of a principal who would directly supervise a dean of students, dean of academics and a director of operations. Three of the members of the leadership team would have extensive experience in developing staff in either math or literacy and would provide relentless coaching towards excellence in the classrooms. Teachers would work from Individualized Teacher Development plans to help them develop their overall competencies and instructional skills. Staff development is intended to be an ongoing and dynamic process at the school and would include full day sessions each month as well as weekly grade level meetings, classroom observations, demonstration classes and team teaching opportunities. In addition, the school intends on providing a Summer Institute dedicated to staff training for two weeks before the start of the school year.

The Foundation would serve as the school's management partner. The chief academic officer of the Foundation would support the school's principal in devising an annual action plan focused on the goals set forth in the school's mission and Accountability Plan. Other services the Foundation would provide include curriculum development, assessment analysis, staff recruitment, financial, operational, technology, fundraising and communications. The Foundation's Alumni Program is a critical part of the value it adds to the schools it manages, providing support services for graduates

from the moment they graduate 8<sup>th</sup> grade through high school and into college. The Foundation would collect a management fee of 9 percent of per pupil and federal funding that Beginning with Children II would receive. A draft management agreement has been included in the proposal; the Institute would review and approve any final version of the management agreement.

The Beginning with Children II by-laws indicate that school board would consist of not less than 5 voting members, and not more than 15. The proposed initial members of the board of trustees are set forth below.

1. **Rubens Amedee** – Vice President of Derivatives, Clearing Group, Goldman Sachs & Co.; B.S., Computer Engineering Technology, Northeastern University.
2. **Lark - Marie Anton** – Vice President for Public Relations, Loews Corporation; B.A. Communications, Marist College; M.A., West Virginia University.
3. **Tyese Brown** – Founder and Clinical Director of the Sister S.A.G.E. program at Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc.; B.A., Psychology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; M.A. Educational Psychology, New York University.
4. **Terri Candy** – Program Manager, Everybody Wins Foundation; previously Director of Admissions, St. Francis College, Brooklyn; B.A., Sociology, Baruch College; Trustee, Community Partnership Charter School since 2008.
5. **Clare Cusack** – Fifth Year Associate, Morgan Lewis & Bockius, LLP; B.A., Political Science & Communications, SUNY Geneseo; J.D., Fordham University School of Law; Trustee, Community Partnership Charter School since 2010.
6. **Katie Cunningham** – Managing Director, Recruitment for Teach for America; B.S., magna cum laude, Economics, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; MBA, Harvard Business School.
7. **Joshua Epstein** – Senior Vice President, Business Development & Operations, MTV Networks; B.A., Princeton University; MBA, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.
8. **Kevin Genirs** – Managing Director and Global General Counsel for the Investment Banking Division, Barclays Capital; B.A., cum laude, Economics and Government, Georgetown University; J.D., Boston University.
9. **Kathy Neuhaus** – Corporate finance (most recently for Plainfield Asset Management); B.A., International Relations & German University of Pennsylvania; MBA, Harvard Business School.
10. **David Stutt** – Retired from Goldman Sachs & Co.; B.S., Finance, University of Vermont; Trustee, Community Partnership Charter School since 2006.

Beginning with Children II plans to be sited in NYCDOE public school space. The Foundation, has successful experience in helping charter schools become and remain effectively co-located within NYCDOE facilities. The original Beginning with Children Charter School was the first charter school to be co-located in NYCDOE facility space on the fourth floor of a special education high school-to-work program. In addition, Community Partnership Charter School is also co-located in two NYCDOE schools in CSD 13 and has experienced a positive working relationship with their NYCDOE colleagues. In the event that Beginning with Children II is not able to secure NYCDOE space, the proposed board of trustees is committed to working with the Foundation to obtain private

space in which to incubate the school. The Foundation has experience successfully providing such services for Community Partnership Charter School when it was founded in 2001 until it moved into its current NYCDOE space in 2004.

Any NYCDOE space would have to be approved through the new provisions of the Education Law related to the co-location of charter schools. In addition, the Institute reserves the right to review and approve all facilities, and, pursuant to the Act, would be required to hold a hearing on behalf of the SUNY Trustees prior to the school occupying district school space.

The fiscal impact of the Beginning with Children Charter School II on the district of residence, the New York City School District, is summarized below.

<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Per Pupil Aid Rate Assumed</b>	<b>Per Pupil Aid Revenue Only</b>	<b>Total Budget for New York City (in billions)</b>	<b>(%) of Total NYC Ed. Budget</b>
50 (2012-13 school year – year 1)	\$13,527	\$676,350	\$19.007	0.003%
250 (2016-17 school year – year 5)	\$14,781	\$3,695,330	\$20.704	0.017%

The calculations above assume there will be no annual increase in per-pupil aid in years 1 and 2 (2012-13, 2013-14) and a three percent increase each year thereafter for the remainder of the charter period (2014-15 thru 2016-17). The NYCDOE yearly budget figures were accessed from the latest, December 2010, Financial Status Report (FSR) published on the NYCDOE website. No information was available for 2015-16 and 2016-17 so no increase in spending was assumed for that year. Using the moderately aggressive assumptions for per-pupil aid and revenue and the district’s four-year operational budgeting assumptions, along with the fundamentally conservative assumptions for years four and five of the proposed charter period, illustrates a maximum fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district.

It should be noted that the NYCDOE estimate used by the Institute in conducting its analysis is subject to unpredictable increases and decreases in any given year given the nature of per-pupil funding for the district. While the school has included in its proposal estimated calculations accounting for special education revenue, federal Title I funds, other federal grants and/or funds provided by the district and to be received by the school, the Institute’s calculations and analysis do not account for these sources of potential revenue.

The Institute finds that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the New York City School District, public charter and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area would be minimal.

The Institute has notified the school district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school. On May 26, 2011, the Institute received positive comments from the NYC Schools Chancellor as follows: “This proposal is a replication of an existing NYC-DOE authorizer charter school. Chancellor Dennis Walcott recommends this charter application to support the children of New York City.”

The applicant has conducted public outreach, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed in the RFP, to solicit community input regarding the proposed school (Ed. Law §2852(9-a)(b)(ii)).

The RFP also contained minimum eligibility and preference criteria to reflect the requirements of Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a). The proposal met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- The proposal was complete and met the following basic criteria:
  - submitted by the appropriate deadline;
  - was complete, i.e., include a Transmittal Sheet, Proposal Summary and responses to all RFP requests;
  - individual responses adequately addressed each specific request; and
  - the proposal was coherent.
- The proposal met the standard for describing a quality educational program and provided sufficient evidence that the proposed school is likely to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner, to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in Education Law subdivision 2850(2) *as well as* demonstrated a rigorous commitment to student achievement;
- The proposal included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees 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.
- The proposal provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school.

As the Beginning with Children II proposals met the eligibility criteria, the Institute's evaluation continued with a full review of proposal, an interview of the founding team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation in relation to the eleven Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP's Scoring Rubric. The purpose of the Scoring Rubric was to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees' requirements exceeded the maximum number of charters to be issued in 2011. In the event of a tie for the last charter both proposals will be rejected unless one applicant agreed to withdraw his or her proposal for consideration in a subsequent RFP. The preference criteria, which in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, included the demonstration of the following in compliance with Education Law subdivisions 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii):

- increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing high school graduation rates and focusing on serving specific high school student populations including, but not limited to, students at risk of not obtaining a high school diploma, re-enrolled high school drop-outs, and students with academic skills below grade level;
- focusing on the academic achievement of middle school students and preparing them for a successful transition to high school;

- utilizing high-quality assessments designed to measure a student's knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply, critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats;
- increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- partnering with low performing public schools in the area to share best educational practices and innovations;
- demonstrating the management and leadership techniques necessary to overcome initial start-up problems to establish a thriving, financially viable charter school; and
- demonstrating the support of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such school district.

While the Institute received a total of 25 proposals in response to its January 2011 RFP, only 14 have been recommended for approval including two in March 2011 which were approved by the SUNY Trustees. All of the 14 proposals recommended for approval met the eligibility criteria and were therefore assessed a score using the rubric contained in the RFP. The proposal for the Beginning with Children Charter School II earned a score of 34 preference points out of a possible total of 64. Based on these scores and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute is recommending that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish the Beginning with Children Charter School II, which does not exceed the statutory limit in Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(a).

### **Findings**

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposal and interviews of the applicant and the proposed board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of Article 56 of the Education Law (as amended) and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
  - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners;
  - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, complaints, personnel matters and health services;
  - an admissions policy that complies with the Act, federal law and the U.S. Constitution;
  - the inclusion of the proposed by-laws for the operation of the school's board of trustees; and
  - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact on surrounding public and private schools.

2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound matter as reflected in (among other things):
  - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the State performance standards;
  - the articulation of a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
  - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
  - an appropriate roster of educational personnel;
  - a sound mission statement;
  - a comprehensive assessment plan;
  - the provision of sound start-up, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
  - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
  - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach its anticipated enrollment;
  - the inclusion of descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least, annually;
  - the inclusion of a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during a school year as required of other public schools; and
  - the inclusion of methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with all federal laws and regulations.
  
3. Granting the proposal is likely to: 1) improve student learning and achievement; and 2) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is reflected by (among other things):
  - the inclusion of a curriculum framework document for the grades the school would offer in its first year of operation that demonstrates how the proposed curriculum will ensure that students will meet or exceed the performance standards of the Board of Regents reflecting the adoption of the Common Core State Standards;
  - a comprehensive plan to assess student achievement through the use of State tests, externally-verifiable standardized tests and other diagnostic assessments;
  - an extended school day and a focus on the foundational skills of literacy and mathematics reflected by the allocation of 50% of the instructional time devoted to these subject areas;
  - robust programs to meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure, English language learners and students with disabilities;
  - the inclusion of significant opportunities for professional development of the school's instructional staff prior the start of each school year and throughout the year, including the use of individual Teacher Development Plans; and

- a proposed management relationship with the Beginning with Children Foundation, including the significant involvement of its chief academic officer, that is likely to allow the school to meet the goals contained in the proposed Accountability Plan.
4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, 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 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 Institute developed internal evaluation criteria regarding the enrollment and retention of each class of student referenced in the amendments to the Act such that the Institute 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, SUNY will develop such targets, and shall ensure: “(1) that such enrollment targets are comparable to the enrollment figures of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located; and (2) that such retention targets are comparable to the rate of retention of such categories of students attending the public schools within the school district, or in a city school district in a city having a population of one million or more inhabitants, the community school district, in which the proposed charter school would be located.” The Institute will conduct separate analyses for setting enrollment and retention targets, respectively. The former analysis will be based on the demographic and classification characteristics of cohorts of students first entering the school; the latter analysis will be based on the characteristics of cohorts of students leaving the school. The comparison will be to an individual school or schools within the district that are representative of the districts’ relevant sub-populations. During each year in the charter period, the same methodology will be applied to each charter school to determine if it has met its district-based target. Based on the foregoing, the Institute finds that the proposals have rigorously demonstrated that the proposed charter schools would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, to be prescribed by SUNY during the first year of each charter in accordance with the amendments to the Act.

5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for each school, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, 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).
6. The Institute has determined that each proposal rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best satisfies the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, is a “qualified application” within the meaning of Education Law subdivision 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the Board of Regents for approval.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish the Beginning with Children Charter School II to open in Brooklyn in September of 2012.

## Beginning with Children Charter School II

### Basic Identification Information

Lead Applicant(s):	George Flowers
Management Co.:	Beginning with Children Foundation
Other Partners:	None
Location (District):	New York City Community School District 14
Student Pop./Grades:	Opening with 50 students in K - 1 <sup>st</sup> grade; growing to 250 students K -5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Opening Date:	September 2012

### School District of Proposed Location Profile

New York City School District 14			
Enrollment (2009-10):		19,554	
Percent (2009-10):			
African-American:		29	
Hispanic:		59	
Asian, White, Other:		8	
Percent Qualifying for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch (2009-010):		85	
English Language Arts (2009-10)		Mathematics (2009-10)	
Grade	Percent Proficient	Grade	Percent Proficient
3	44	3	48
4	44	4	58
5	44	5	59
6	34	6	44
7	31	7	46
8	31	8	42

Source: demographic data are from the New York State Accountability and Overview Report 2009-10; test data are from the 2009-10 results released on the New York City Department of Education's website.