



## SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

# Charter Facts

May/June 2006

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 granted the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York the power to authorize 50 charters, for the purpose of organizing and operating independent and autonomous public charter schools offering instruction in grades K-12. The Charter Schools Institute was created by the Board of Trustees in February 1999 to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act.

Guided by the rigorous standards set by the Board of Trustees, the Institute's oversight of SUNY authorized charter schools is comprehensive, including: evaluating initial applications for the opening of charter schools; providing technical assistance and guidance to schools where necessary, requiring schools to take remedial action or placing schools on probation; 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.

Early results show that the model of charter education fostered by this detailed authorization process in New York is working.

### *About SUNY Authorized Charter Schools*

- 36 SUNY authorized charter schools served more than 10,700 students in the 2005-2006 academic year. The vast majority serve disadvantaged students at risk of academic failure.
- The majority of SUNY charter schools offer instruction at the elementary level; however, as these schools grow, many will offer both middle and secondary instruction.
- As of this writing: 4 SUNY authorized charter schools are scheduled to open in 2006/2007, 5 more have been authorized by the Board of Trustees and await their formal incorporation by the New York State Board of Regents.
- Since granting its first charter in 1999, the Board of Trustees has voted not to renew, i.e., close, five charter schools. Consonant with its commitment to accountability, these schools were closed for failing to meet the Board's rigorous standards for improving student achievement.

***“SUNY has been a particularly effective authorizer. It has taken its authorizing duties seriously—both in approving and in overseeing charters—and has not been afraid to close charters that haven't lived up to their promises.”***

- National Alliance for  
Public Charter Schools,  
May 2006 Issue Brief

***“...in establishing SUNY's Charter Schools Institute, the SUNY Trustees have created a model authorizing administration for chartering. Moreover, the Charter Schools Institute and the SUNY Trustees have demonstrated a willingness to act as a responsible steward by closing down a number of poorly performing and dysfunctional charter schools.”***

- Leo Casey, edwize.com,  
posted February 2006

## *SUNY Authorized Charter Schools: Academic Performance*

- 24 SUNY charter schools administered the 2005 state mathematics assessments to fourth graders:
  - 17 charter schools, 71 percent, out-performed the districts in which they are located; and
  - 14 of 24 charter schools made larger gains than their respective districts since the 2004 administration.
- 24 SUNY charter schools administered the 2005 state ELA assessments to fourth graders:
  - 11 schools, 46 percent, out-performed the districts in which they are located; and
  - 15 of 24 schools made larger gains than their respective districts since the 2004 administration.
- 6 SUNY charter schools administered the 2005 state mathematics assessments to eighth graders:
  - 4 schools, 67 percent, out-performed the districts in which they are located; and
  - 2 of the 6 schools made larger gains than their respective districts since the 2004 administration.
- 6 SUNY charter schools administered the 2005 state ELA assessments to eighth graders:
  - 4 schools, 67 percent, out-performed the districts in which they are located; and
  - 2 of the 6 schools made larger gains than their respective districts since the 2004 administration.
- In addition to meeting performance standards on state exams, SUNY charter schools are required to develop—and report annually on their progress toward meeting—a comprehensive set of student achievement measures.

## *SUNY Authorized Charter Schools: Renewal*

- In the 2006-2007 school year, 5 SUNY charter schools will apply for charter renewal (charters are initially granted for a maximum term of five years; then schools must apply for renewal).
- In keeping with its commitment to high-quality charter schools, the Board of Trustees does not automatically grant charter renewal; a school must demonstrate that it has earned it.

*“...even if you disagree with some of their decisions, you have to acknowledge that SUNY’s Charter Schools Institute has earned a national reputation for rigorous oversight, both at the application stage and for its charter renewals (and at all times in between).”*

- Joe Williams, The Chalkboard (nycsa.org/blog), posted January 23, 2006

*“SUNY is rigorous in its oversight of schools and has consistently made fair, sometimes difficult, decisions regarding renewal; decisions always made in the best interest of the students of the State of New York.”*

- Bill Phillips, President New York Charter Schools Association

## **Address Change**

The Albany Office of the SUNY Charter Schools Institute has moved. Please take a moment to update your records:

Charter Schools Institute  
State University of New York  
41 State Street, Suite 700  
Albany, New York 12207

Look for our new and improved website in mid-June 2006:  
[www.newyorkcharters.org](http://www.newyorkcharters.org)

## SUNY Authorized Charter Schools

County/ Borough	City/ Area	School	Grades Offered 05-06	Grades at Full Implementation of Charter
Albany	Albany	Achievement Academy	5	5-8
		Albany Preparatory	5	5-8
		KIPP Tech Valley	5	5-8
		New Covenant	K-6	K-6
Brooklyn	Brooklyn	Community Partnership	K-5	K-5
		Brooklyn Excelsior	K-6	K-7
		Excellence C.S. of Bedford-Stuyvesant	K-2	K-5
		UFT	K-1	K-5
Bronx	Bronx	Bronx C.S. for Better Learning	1-3	K-4
		Bronx C.S. for Excellence	K-2	K-4
		Bronx Preparatory	5-11	5-12
		Carl C. Icahn	K-6	K-8
		Family Life	K-5	K-5
		Grand Concourse	K-3	K-4
Erie	Buffalo	Buffalo United	K-6	K-7
		King Center	K-4	K-4
		KIPP Sankofa	5-7	5-8
		Oracle	7-9	7-12
		South Buffalo	K-8	K-8
		Tapestry	K-8	K-12
Manhattan	New York	Amber	K-6	K-6
		Girls Preparatory C.S. of NY	K-1	K-4
		Harbor	1-8	1-8
		Harlem Village	5-7	5-8
		KIPP S.T.A.R. College Prep	5-7	5-8
		Harlem Day	K-5	K-5
		Harlem Link	K-1	K-4
		Leadership Village	5	5-6
		Sisulu-Walker C.S. of Harlem	K-2, 5	K-5
Monroe	Rochester	Eugenio Maria de Hostos	K-6	K-6
Nassau	Roosevelt	Roosevelt Children's Academy	K-7	K-8
Queens	Astoria	Our World Neighborhood	K-8	K-8
Queens	Jamaica	Merrick Academy-Queens Public	K-6	K-6
Rensselaer	Troy	Ark Community	K-5	K-6
Schenectady	Rotterdam	International C.S. of Schenectady	K-7	K-8
Suffolk	Wainscott	Child Development Center/Hamptons	K-8	K-8

To open in 2006/2007:  
**Albany Community** (Albany, K-4), **Family Academy** (Bronx, K-6), **Henry Johnson** (Albany, K-4) and **Leadership Prep** (New York, K-4)

Awaiting Incorporation by the Regents:  
**Achievement First-Bushwick** (North Brooklyn, K-8), **Bedford-Stuyvesant Collegiate** (New York, 5-9), **Carl C. Icahn Bronx North** (New York, K-5), **Green Tech High** (Albany, 9-12), **True North Rochester Preparatory** (Rochester, 5-8)

- Only by providing: 1) a comprehensive, evidence-based, case of the school's growth and increased student achievement over the life of the charter, 2) a description of the systems the school currently has in place to continue that growth, and 3) a set of well-designed plans that will result in further growth, will a school have demonstrated that it deserves to continue the high privilege of educating New York State's children.

### *Charter Schools in New York State*

- In 2005-2006, New York's charter schools—including those authorized by the State University of New York, the New York State Board of Regents, or local boards of education (in New York City, authorizing power is vested in the Chancellor)—served over 22,000 students.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 10,000 students are on waiting lists for seats at charter schools across the state.<sup>1</sup>
- Based on the most recent data from the State Education Department (2004-2005), New York's charter school students are: 87 percent under-represented/minority; 76 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch; 9 percent were identified as needing special education services; and 2 percent were identified as English Language Learners.
- As of this writing, all 100 charters initially authorized by the Charter Schools Act have been issued. Discussions about lifting this cap on charter school growth continue.

The State University of New York is committed to the authorization, and subsequent renewal, of highly successful charter schools. Through a rigorous authorization process and true commitment to accountability, SUNY authorized charter schools serve as national exemplars.

<sup>1</sup> Source: New York Charter Schools Association

## About School Choice

The New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 called for the creation of schools that would “provide opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently of existing schools and districts,” and meet the following objectives:

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at-risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Charter schools are tuition-free, public schools—open to all children—that receive public education funding. What distinguishes a charter school from other public schools is that it is generally independent of the local school district and is governed by its own self-selected board of trustees.

Striking the delicate balance between giving schools autonomy and providing responsible oversight—and between treating the schools as independent institutions and still assuring accountability—are among the most pressing challenges facing today's charter school authorizers. It was with great pride that SUNY learned it was identified in the May 2006 *Issue Brief* from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools as, “...a particularly effective authorizer. It has taken its authorizing duties seriously—both in approving and in overseeing charters—and has not been afraid to close charters that haven't lived up to their promises.”