

To: Charter Schools Office, New York State Department of Education

Fr: Hannah Shirey, New York City Charter School Center

Re: Comments on Draft January 2015 Request for Proposals to Establish Charter Schools Authorized by the Board of Regents

January 23, 2015

On behalf of the New York City Charter School Center, I respectfully submit the following comments on the Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) referenced above.

New Applicant and Prospective School Trustee Background Information

- Having already expressed concern that the New Applicant and Prospective School Trustee Background Information guidelines, specifically the transcript requirement, may be an excessive hindrance to the recruitment of board members, we were pleased to note the addition of additional guidance on fulfilling this requirement (see page 16).
- In the New Applicant and Prospective School Trustee Background Information form, Question #25 asks applicant group members and prospective BOT candidates to affirm that they've read the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies. However, at the time of the submission of the Letter of Intent, these documents may not be fully prepared and are not mentioned as being required. Question #25 could be updated to state: *Please affirm that you have read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies. If your team has not yet submitted a full application, please affirm that you will commit to read and understand the charter school application, the charter school board's by-laws and all proposed policies at the time of its submission for review.*
- Page 41 references attachments 5b and 5c, with the caveat that they should be submitted *if revised from the Letter of Intent*. The Letter of Intent instructions, however, only request that attachment 5a is submitted. This discrepancy should be corrected.
- Additionally, page 16 has a typo. *YSED* should most likely be *NYSED*.

Applicant/Founding Group Capacity

- In the Letter of Intent to Apply Evaluation Criteria (see page 15), the term *Applicant Group* is newly applied to include the applicant group (including those individuals formerly identified as *lead applicants*), initial board of trustees, and any proposed school employees. In the Full Application Evaluation Criteria (see page 40), the terminology is slightly different in that it is *Applicant/Founding Group*. Clarity and consistency is necessary in terms of these categories.

CSP Grant Priorities

- It remains unclear whether Design Priority 9 (see page 63) is meant to apply to *any* charter school replication, or only the "first" replication of an existing, heretofore standalone charter school. The latter is preferable as a policy, since replication within existing networks has been steady, statewide, even without a CSP incentive.