

Potential Talking Points - Organized by Category (some overlap)

General – SUNY's Strength as an Authorizer

- SUNY is the largest charter school authorizer in the state having approved 64 charters: 49 schools currently in operation, another 14 schools to open this fall and the fall of 2010.
- SUNY is the only authorizer in the state to have closed schools for academic underperformance. A total of 7 schools have been closed to date: Buffalo (2), Harlem, Syracuse, Rochester (2), and Schenectady.
- SUNY is the only authorizer in the state to allow multiple schools to operate under the same governing board or with overlapping board members; a natural progression for successful schools working to replicate: the Icahn Charter Schools; the Girls Preparatory Charter Schools; the Leadership Prep, Collegiate, and Excellence networks of charter schools affiliated with Uncommon Schools Inc.; schools working to replicate the successful Amistad Charter School in Connecticut under the Achievement First umbrella.
- SUNY authorized charter schools are a diverse mix of schools: several dual-language schools; a school devoted to an inclusionary model of instruction where more than 50% of the student body has special education needs; a school utilizing Gattegno's *Subordination of Teaching to Learning* pedagogy; a school infusing the principles of sustainability throughout the curriculum; several schools using *Core Knowledge*; several schools using the *Success for All* program; a school implementing the *Middle Years Programme* of the International Baccalaureate Programme, planning to grow to offer the IBE degree; multiple single gender schools both at the elementary growing to middle school levels and at the high school level; and more.
- SUNY authorized charter schools are also diverse in that some are locally driven "mom and pop" schools started by groups of community members, parents and/or teachers and others are affiliated with more recognizable names like Icahn or Achievement First.
- SUNY was selected from over 800 charter authorizers nationally by the United States Department of Education in 2007 as an exemplar of high quality charter authorizing, noting specifically its application review process and rigorous charter renewal policies.
- SUNY works with schools to develop academic Accountability Plans in their first year of operation that are then incorporated into the school's charter. SUNY requires all schools to set certain measures including absolute measures (ex. at least 75% of 2nd year students at proficiency); comparative measures (ex. schools perform better than expected among similar (% of students qualifying for free lunch) schools state-wide; and growth measures (ex. each grade level cohort reduces by half the gap between previous year's % at proficiency and 75 percent).

- The majority of SUNY authorized charter schools seek out at-risk students:
 - 90% of students in SUNY authorized charter schools have self identified as Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or multi-racial;
 - 76% of students in SUNY authorized charter schools qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- All SUNY charter schools are actively engaged in the communities they serve. The schools are diverse in that some are locally driven “mom and pop” schools started by community members, parents and/or teachers and others are affiliated with more recognizable names like Icahn or Achievement First.
- SUNY is a founding member of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, the internationally recognized body that sets quality standards for charter school authorizers.

Regents Approvals/Non-Approvals of SUNY Actions; Performance by Authorizer

- For the period 1999 - 2007, the NYS Board of Regents supported SUNY decisions on new charter school applications 75.5% of the time.
- After June 2007, that percentage dropped to 31.82% despite the following:
 - A greater percentage of students at SUNY authorized charter schools scored at or above proficiency on the New York State standardized exams in math and ELA than students at charter schools authorized by Regents or NYCDOE.

ELA: SUNY, 80%; Regents, 72%; DOE, 76%.
Math: SUNY, 86%; Regents, 78%, DOE, 67.8%.
 - A greater percentage of SUNY authorized charter schools outperformed their local district on the math and ELA assessments than those authorized by the Regents or NYCDOE.

ELA: SUNY, 88%; Regents, 85%; DOE, 82%.
Math: SUNY, 92%; Regents, 78%; DOE, 79%.
 - In comparison to demographically similar—like percentages of free-lunch eligible—schools statewide (charter and non-charter), SUNY charter schools outperform those authorized by the Regents on the 2007-08 state assessments in math and ELA.

ELA: With a weighted average Effect Size of 0.33, SUNY authorized charter schools better than expected, while Regents authorized schools performed slightly worse than expected with a weighted average Effect Size of -0.16.

Math: With a weighted average Effect Size of 0.51, SUNY authorized charter schools performed better than expected, while Regents authorized schools performed slightly worse than expected with a weighted average Effect Size of 0.09.

- SUNY serves more students of color (including students self-identifying as Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and multi-racial) than charter schools authorized by the Regents.
SUNY: 90%. Regents: 78%.
- SUNY serves more academically disadvantaged students (those qualifying for free or reduced lunch) than charter schools authorized by the Regents or the NYCDOE.
SUNY: 76%. Regents: 72%. DOE: 74%.
- Among the schools that the Regents did not approve are numerous examples of successful schools including:
 - The Excellence Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant, an all-boys schools charter school serving a student population self-identifying as 97% black or African American; a population that the Regents has identified as at great risk of academic failure. Students testing at proficiency:
ELA: **Charter, 93%**; District, 53.9%. **Math: Charter, 100%**, District, 79%.
 - The True North Rochester Preparatory Charter School located in Rochester serves a student population where more than 60% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Percent of students at proficiency:
ELA: **Charter, 81%**; District, 54%. **Math: Charter, 94%**; District, 58%.
 - The Roosevelt Children's Academy Charter School located in a district that has been under the control of the Regents for more than a dozen years. Students at proficiency:
ELA: **Charter, 86%**; District, 69%. **Math: Charter, 96%**, District, 74%.

SUNY's Presence in the City

- 32 of the 49 SUNY authorized charter schools in operation this year are in NYC. Another 14 SUNY approved schools will open in the City this fall and next
- The SUNY Charter Schools Institute has a New York City office.
- Four of the six SUNY Trustees that comprise the Trustees' Charter Schools Committee, including the Chairman, live and work in New York City. The Chairman of the Trustees' Charter Schools Committee has always been based in NYC.

Facility Hearings

- SUNY is not involved in any discussions about what space may or may not be available or offered by the New York City Department of Education to a SUNY authorized charter school proposed to be located in New York City.

- SUNY requires new school applicants that plan to request space in a Department of Education building to provide evidence of alternative facility arrangements.
- If the NYCDOE does offer a proposed charter school space then, by law, the school's authorizer must hold a public hearing before the charter school can occupy that space, and the SUNY Charter Schools Institute does so on behalf of the SUNY Board of Trustees.
- When the SUNY hearing is held, NYCDOE, as part of its community outreach on space utilization, holds a hearing at the same time.
- NYCDOE staff and staff from the SUNY Charter Schools Institute therefore facilitate the hearing. All verbal and written testimony collected by the NYCDOE is provided to SUNY, and any comments received by SUNY are provided to the NYCDOE. As listed in its hearing notice, SUNY keeps the comment period open for a period of 10 - 14 days after the hearing date.
- Based on prior experience, hearings tend to generate comments equally split in favor of and against charter schools generally, and secondarily regarding a charter school moving into the district school space. Most negative, or comments in opposition, are directed to the NYCDOE regarding issues other than the allotment of space to charter schools, and range from concerns about particular students to the phasing out of district schools; these are in which issues SUNY plays no role.
- SUNY does not make a preliminary determination on the suitability of including a NYCDOE space in a new charter school's facility plan until the public comments have been considered after the close of the comment period.
- More importantly, the facility approval process for a new SUNY authorized charter school is far more involved as set forth in the school's charter agreement. The lease or MOU must be reviewed by the school's counsel and approved by the Institute. The school must also submit a facilities completion schedule detailing any renovations and providing a budget showing that school can afford the renovations. In addition, no new charter school is given permission to open until the SUNY Charter Schools Institute has inspected the facility space as part of a pre-opening check which happens in mid-summer. The health, safety and welfare of charter school students is always the primary concern of the Charter Schools Institute.

SUNY Charter School Performance on 2008-09 State Test Results in English language arts

- According to the State Education Department, the state-wide average % at proficiency for the 2008-09 ELA exam -- for all schools -- was 77%. SUNY authorized charter schools, with a state-wide average proficiency rate of 80.5%, outperformed the state-wide average (77%), also the average proficiency rate of all charter schools state-wide (76.4%).
- SUNY had more students taking the test than the other charter school authorizers: 7,954 as compared to 3,852 students in Regents authorized schools and 5,422 students in DOE authorized schools.

- 87.5% of SUNY authorized charter schools outperformed their local district, as compared to 85% of Regents authorized schools and 82.1% of DOE authorized schools.
- 7 of the top 10 performing charter schools state-wide were authorized by SUNY, 1 by the Regents, and 2 by the DOE.
- In looking at the average difference between the charter schools' percent at proficiency and the district's percent at proficiency, SUNY authorized charter schools outperformed their local districts by the greatest margin: 17.7%, as compared to 11.4% for the Regents and 10.6% for DOE.
- 6 of the top 10 performing charter schools in terms of difference in average % at proficiency over local district were SUNY authorized schools, the Regents have 1, and DOE has 3.
- In New York City, students in SUNY authorized charter schools had a greater average proficiency rate (82.1%) as compared to all New York City public schools (68.8%) and all New York City charter schools (78.6).
- Results by the authorizer in NYC: SUNY authorized: 82.1%; Regents authorized: 73.7%; DOE authorized: 76.0
- 4 of the top 5 charter schools state-wide were authorized by SUNY - 4 in NYC, 1 Long Island. 7 out of the top 10 charter schools state-wide were authorized by SUNY - 6 in NYC, 1 in Long Island, 1 in Rochester.
- Student demographics among the authorizers are comparable:

Authorizer	Total % Free and Reduced Lunch	% Am. Ind.	% Black	% Hisp.	% Asian	% White	% Multi	% LEP (ELL)
SED/DOE	73.0	0.2	60.4	33.3	1.8	3.2	1.1	4.0
SUNY	74.2	0.1	69.6	25.2	1.9	2.9	0.2	3.6

- In New York City, SUNY authorized charter schools had a greater average school proficiency rate (82.1%) as compared to all New York City public schools (68.8%) and all New York City charters (78.6%).
- Results by authorizer in the City: SUNY: 82.1%; Regents & DOE combined: 75.7%; Regents: 73.7%; DOE: 76.0