



August 4, 2017

Dear SUNY Board of Trustees' Charter Schools Committee,

The purpose of this letter is to provide the comments of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (National Alliance) on proposed regulations of the SUNY Board of Trustees' Charter Schools Committee on Section 700.4. The National Alliance commends SUNY's proposal to permit high performing public charter schools to provide an alternative teacher certification pathway. This program can help solve a critical teacher shortage problem that disproportionately impacts disadvantaged students.

New York State, like many other places in the country, faces a teacher shortage. The impact of this shortage is most deeply felt in poor neighborhoods, where it's becoming increasingly difficult to hire qualified teachers. Nationally, schools with more minority and low-income students have more difficulty staffing one or more subject areas.

This proposal stands to create a critical pipeline to provide quality teachers where they are needed most. Public charter schools in New York primarily operate in poor, inner-city neighborhoods and serve high-needs student population. Despite many challenges, they have shown remarkable student achievement gains in New York City. In fact, the city's charter schools have raised local district English language arts by approximately 13% and math proficiency rates by 4.5%. Charter school performance surpassed district averages in both math and ELA in 24 of the 28 Community School Districts where charters operate.

We support SUNY's requirement that the applicant must show academic success, as this is consistent with the charter school promise of strong accountability for results. Success Academy, for example, has produced substantial academic gains for poor children. In fact, it was awarded the prestigious 2017 Broad Prize for Public Charter Schools in June, given to the public charter management organization that has demonstrated the best academic outcomes in the country, particularly for low-income students and students of color. Yet Success Academy, like many public charter schools in New York have difficulty finding qualified, certified teachers to work in the impoverished inner-city neighborhoods where they operate.

Further, the National Alliance supports the requirement that the instructional program maintain high standards for candidates. Charter Management Organizations like Success Academy have already developed their own robust teacher training programs to tackle the challenges of educating high-need student populations. Even as this network has expanded, it

has maintained high standards and consistent results for children. For the past three years, Success Academy students have ranked in the top 1% in math and top 3% in ELA in New York. During that time, the network trained thousands of teachers, providing new and returning teachers with the equivalent of 13 weeks of training and development every year. The Success model emphasizes practical hands-on classroom experience with daily feedback from the school leadership team as well as from network managers.

I urge SUNY to finalize and implement this rule. It will enable the highest-performing public charter schools to help New York strengthen its high-quality teacher pipeline and continue to close the achievement gap for the neediest children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nina G. Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "N".

Nina Rees
President and CEO
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools