

Associate Counsel, Carrie Gee  
SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
State University of New York  
41 State Street, Suite 700  
Albany, NY 12207

December 16, 2017

Dear Ms. Gee,

We are members of the Community Education Council for District 2 (CECD2) and we are writing regarding the revision application from Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC for their sites in Union Square and Hell's Kitchen located in Community School District 2 (CSD2).

Our primary question is: why do the dates in the revision application include the current academic year, 2017-2018, which is already in progress. Why wasn't the community contacted with a request for feedback **before** the academic year included in the application? It appears the changes have been made without any community feedback.

CECD2 is on record opposing charter schools (Resolution #58: Moratorium on Charter Applications, passed in March 2012). This obtuse, opaque process of making enrollment changes and then requesting feedback after the fact demonstrates one of the major reasons for the skepticism about charter schools.

Although the timing of the hearings indicate that the request for feedback is merely to check off a statutory requirement, as opposed to an earnest interest in understanding the role the charters play in our community, we would still like to make an informed comment on the merits of the revision as requested, so we demand that the CECD2 is provided with the following:

1. Number of applicants from within CSD2 and outside of CSD2
2. Number of offers from within CSD2 and outside of CSD2
3. Home elementary school zone of registered students
4. Enrollment numbers by grade
5. Year to year attrition rates
6. Percentages of ELL students, students with disabilities, students in temporary housing, and students eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch by grade

Charter schools consider themselves to be public schools. As such, this information should be easily available to the public that funds them through taxes and whom they purport to serve.

Charter applications in D2 to date have not convincingly demonstrated a need, and we know from research that charter schools do not necessarily perform better than district schools. District 2 does not have any elementary or middle schools that are considered struggling or in need of improvement according to the NYS Education Department's accountability system. Our

community has not demanded alternatives to public school; rather the demand is for more traditional public schools to relieve overcrowding.

In addition, some charter operators, such as Success Academy, have been known to engage in ethically questionable practices (not enrolling their fair share of students with special needs, “got to go” lists, “counseling out” of students with special needs, requiring parents to lobby Albany legislators, and more). We are incredulous that a publicly funded school is not held to the same accountability and ethical standards as the district schools. While charter schools are free from bureaucratic hurdles that may hamper pedagogical innovation, they should be held accountable with appropriate oversight.

For too long new, renewal, and revision applications have been rubber stamped by authorizing institutions; the timing of this hearing makes the charge self-evident. As long as these charter schools receive public funding, we have the right to know how our tax money is resulting in better education for all our children. We urge you to reconsider this process and to provide us with the necessary data so that we can critically evaluate the performance and practices of the Success Academy Charter Schools located in our district.

Sincerely,  
Robin Broshi, President CECD2 and IEP Representative  
Shino Tanikawa, Vice President CECD2  
John Keller, Treasurer CECD2  
Josephine Ishmon, Recording Secretary CECD2  
Amy Cheung, ELL Representative  
Lauren Chung  
Joanne Diaz  
Eric Goldberg  
Emily Hellstrom  
Maud Maron  
Sally Printz