

Comments on Draft 2024 SUNY Request for Proposals (“RFP”) To Authorize New Charter Schools in New York State

Collected by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on behalf of the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”)

Date: December 6, 2023

The Institute thanks all parties who submitted comments on the Draft 2024 RFP for their time and thoughtful feedback. The table below summarizes the comments, provides discussion of the Institute’s review of those comments, and details any resulting changes to the RFP.

In addition to the comments discussed below, the Institute received several comments highlighting opportunities to clarify formatting or ensure consistency in terms used across the RFP; the Institute appreciates and has incorporated these suggestions.

The Institute also received several comments and suggestions pertaining to issues not directly related to the RFP. We appreciate these suggestions and will consider them and share them with other relevant partner and support organizations.

Comment	Discussion	Resulting Changes to RFP
A comment suggested that the RFP should prioritize innovation in its scoring and subsequent awarding of new charters to strong applicant groups to at least the same degree as replicating schools are prioritized.	The Institute determined that the RFP as written provides multiple opportunities for applicant groups to describe innovative aspects of their program in detail as well as evidence and analysis of need for their specific academic program in the proposed community. The Institute closely considers this evidence in its proposal review process and reiterates its commitment to recommend proposals for approval that are likely to further the purposes of the NYC Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”), including the	No changes.

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	<p>purpose to encourage the use of “different and innovative teaching methods.” The Institute and SUNY Trustees reiterate their support for “innovative program designs,” as stated on page 1 of the 2024 RFP.</p>	
<p>A number of comments suggested that priority should be given to applicants whose board and leadership demonstrate tangible, authentic community connections and cultural representation that directly correlates with their proposed student population.</p>	<p>The Institute and SUNY Trustees reiterate their support for “schools designed to increase equity and diversity in proposed charter school founding board of trustee members, founding teams, teachers, and staff,” as stated on page 1 of the 2024 RFP. The 2024 RFP also increases the number of priority scoring points that may be earned in category 1 “Community Need, Outreach, and Involvement,” from three to six points.</p> <p>The Institute determined that it was appropriate to add additional, specific opportunities for applicants to describe evidence of their connections and ties to the proposed community of location, as well as evidence of policies and processes in place to ensure that the school’s leadership, staff, and board members represent the interests of the students and families it intends to serve. Additionally, the RFP as written incorporates multiple opportunities for applicants to provide evidence of the ways in which their</p>	<p>The following language was added to the RFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response 1a-Community Description and Need now includes two distinct and specific bullet points asking applicant groups to describe their “rationale for selecting the community,” and “founding team members’ connections and ties to the proposed community of location. • Response 11b-School Leadership and Management Structure now includes language directing applicant groups to describe “Processes, policies, and strategies the school would implement to ensure hiring processes for school leaders are open and fair with outreach to a broad and robust pool of candidates, including

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	<p>proposed school would represent the interests of the community it proposes to serve, such as in Request 2 – Addressing the Need, Request 3 – Proposal History, and Request 4 – Community Outreach, Engagement, Support, and Demand.</p>	<p>underserved and unrepresented communities.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response 12b-Qualifications and Responsibilities now includes language directing applicant groups to describe “Processes, policies, and strategies the school would implement to ensure hiring processes for teachers and staff are open and fair with outreach to a broad and robust pool of candidates, including underserved and unrepresented communities.” • Response 14a-Board Members now includes language directing applicant groups to “describe the process applicants used and will use to recruit well-qualified proposed board members who bring relevant experience that will support effective governance and should also describe steps that were taken and will be taken to recruit board members who are representative of the interests of the students and families the school proposes to serve.”

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<p>A number of comments suggested that language should be included in the RFP that limits the number of charters that can be applied for by/awarded to any one applicant group.</p>	<p>The Institute and SUNY Trustees reiterate their commitment to a rigorous review process that results in recommending new charters for approval that are likely to further the purposes of the Act. The Institute and SUNY Trustees also reiterate their support for “diversity and innovative program designs,” as stated on page 1 of the 2024 RFP. The RFP will reserve the right of the SUNY Trustees to limit the number of charters that can be awarded to any one applicant group should they determine that doing so is appropriate in order to further the purposes detailed above.</p>	<p>The following language was added to page 2:</p> <p>“The SUNY Trustees reserve the right to grant no more than one charter each to applicant group and/or education corporation.”</p>
<p>A number of comments suggested that applicant groups that have been awarded charters that have yet to open should not be allowed to apply under the 2024 RFP.</p>	<p>The Institute and SUNY Trustees reiterate their commitment to a rigorous review process that results in recommending new charters for approval that are likely to further the purposes of the Act. The Institute and SUNY Trustees also reiterate their support for “diversity and innovative program designs,” as stated on page 1 of the 2024 RFP. The RFP will reserve the right of the SUNY Trustees to limit the number of charters that can be awarded to any one applicant group should they determine that doing so is appropriate in order to further the purposes detailed above.</p>	<p>The following language was added to page 2:</p> <p>“The SUNY Trustees also reserve the right to restrict the eligibility of applicants who have requested to delay, or are delaying, the opening of already issued charters.”</p>

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<p>A comment suggested that the RFP should not require applicants to identify consultants who supported proposal development as part of the founding team.</p>	<p>The Institute determined that the suggested modification is appropriate. The RFP will not explicitly require that applicants identify consultants or support organizations who assisted in developing the proposal.</p> <p>The Institute also notes that if any consultants or support organizations will provide significant ongoing management services to the proposed school if approved, the type and scope of services must still be detailed in Request 13 (Partner Organizations). In addition, other relevant responses should reflect such contracted services that would be provided (for example, if the proposed school would contract aspects of financial management, Response 21 should reflect this.)</p>	<p>Requests 3b and 3c have been modified to remove language referring to consultants or support organizations.</p>
<p>A comment requested that the timeline for when proposals are due be modified to allow more time for applicant groups to review the RFP and complete proposal materials.</p>	<p>The Institute determined that this recommendation was appropriate.</p>	<p>The due date for proposals to open charter schools in New York City will now be February 8, 2024. The due date for proposals to open charter schools outside of New York City will now be June 3, 2024.</p>