



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH
KWENDA COLLEGIATE GIRLS CHARTER SCHOOL



BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The applicant originally submitted a proposal (the “Original Proposal”) to establish Kwenda Collegiate Girls Charter School (“Kwenda”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on January 9, 2019 in response to the Institute’s 2019 Request for Proposals (the “RFP”), which was released on behalf of the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) on December 12, 2018. After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”), the Institute found the Original Proposal rigorously demonstrated the criteria detailed in the RFP, which align with the Act.

The SUNY Trustees voted to approve the Original Proposal for Kwenda on March 4, 2019. At the same meeting, the SUNY Trustees voted to approve 12 other proposals for new charters in New York City. At the time of the SUNY Trustees’ vote to approve the Original Proposal, there were only seven charters available to grant in New York City, consistent with amendments to the Act in 2015 which restricted the total number of charter schools the SUNY Trustees and New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) were permitted to approve to open within New York City.

The Act requires charter authorizing bodies to establish a preference scoring rubric based on statutory and authorizer standards in order to prioritize new charter proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the authorizing entity’s standards exceeds the maximum number of charters available. The RFP identified the Institute’s preference scoring rubric, including the required preference criteria detailed in Education Law § 2852(9-a), as well as the SUNY Trustees’ additional criteria. The Institute implemented its established evaluation and review process to assign a preference score to each proposal recommended for approval. The Original Proposal for Kwenda earned a preference score of 19.5 preference points. Based on the overall preference score order for all 13 proposals recommended for approval at the March 4, 2019 meeting, there was an insufficient number of charters available to award Kwenda a charter at the time.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Institute released the 2023 RFP on behalf of the SUNY Trustees on February 10, 2023. Within the 2023 RFP, the SUNY Trustees reserve the right to “hold additional rounds in the year,” and state that “only in the event that additional charters become available for the Trustees to grant in New York City in 2023 will the Institute identify and publish an additional application schedule for New York City under this RFP.”

In May 2023 and deemed effective April 1, 2023, amendments to the Act made 14 charters available to grant to applicant groups in New York City. As a result of these charters being made available, the Institute issued a Supplement to the 2023 RFP (the “RFP Supplement”) on June 21, 2023 identifying an additional

application round for proposals to open charters in New York City solely to the applicant groups whose proposals were approved pursuant to the 2019 RFP but not granted a charter.

The applicant submitted the updated proposal to establish Kwenda to the Institute on August 9, 2023 in response to the 2023 RFP Supplement. The Institute makes copies of applications available [on its website](#).

Kwenda intends to operate one school in public space in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 22 in Brooklyn. The proposed school will open in August 2025 with 108 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade, and ultimately grow to serve 324 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade during its first charter term. If renewed, the school plans to add 6th – 8th grade, one grade per year, during the first three years of a subsequent charter term, pending Institute approval. Kwenda will admit new students and fill seats that become available as the result of attrition in all grade levels.

After a thorough review process consistent with the Act, the Institute finds that the updated proposal for Kwenda rigorously demonstrates the criteria detailed in the RFP, which align with the Act.

Based on the proposal, as amended, and the foregoing:

The Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the updated proposal to establish the Kwenda Collegiate Girls Charter School.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINDINGS

| 2

PREFERENCE
SCORING

| 10

BACKGROUND &
DESCRIPTION

| 4

CONCLUSION &
RECOMMENDATIONS

| 11

NOTIFICATION &
PUBLIC COMMENTS

| 10

APPENDIX A
Summary of Public
Comments Received
APPENDIX B
District Information

FINDINGS

Based on the comprehensive review of the proposal and interviews of the applicant and the proposed education corporation board of trustees, the Institute makes the following findings.

1. The charter school described in the proposal meets the requirements of the Act and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations as reflected in (among other things):
 - the inclusion of appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies for addressing the issues related to student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
 - the inclusion of by-laws for the operation of the education corporation; and,
 - the inclusion of an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the school on surrounding public and private schools.
2. The applicant has demonstrated the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner as reflected in (among other things):
 - the provision of an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - the articulation of a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
 - appropriate rosters of educational personnel;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - the provision of sound startup, first-year, and five-year budget plans;
 - a plan to acquire comprehensive general liability insurance to include any vehicles, employees, and property;
 - evidence of adequate community support for, and interest in, the charter school sufficient to allow the school to reach anticipated enrollment;
 - the inclusion of descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
 - the inclusion of a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instructional time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - the inclusion of methods and strategies for serving students with disabilities in compliance with federal laws and regulations.
3. Granting the proposals is likely to: a) have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school; b) improve student learning and achievement; and, c) materially further the purposes of the Act. This finding is supported by (among other things):
 - extended learning opportunities with 880 minutes of English language arts (“ELA”), 440 minutes of mathematics, 200 minutes of science, and 80 minutes of social studies instruction each week;
 - a dedicated daily science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (“STEAM”) course designed to develop knowledge and problem solving skills and introduce girls to technology-related fields in which women are currently underrepresented;

- an intentional approach to empowering and developing student voice through daily leadership and community building lessons and exercises such as morning meetings and community circles;
 - an intervention structure that provides students with 120 minutes weekly of targeted academic support for students at all ability levels; and,
 - a teacher training system that features a robust suite of formal professional development and coaching that all teachers can expect to receive each week.
4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible applicants for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch (“FRPL”) program as required by Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i).
 5. The applicant has conducted public outreach for the school, in conformity with a thorough and meaningful public review process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, to solicit community input regarding the proposed charter school and to address comments received from the impacted community concerning the educational and programmatic needs of students in conformity with Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(ii).
 6. The Institute has determined that the proposal rigorously demonstrates the criteria and best satisfies the objectives contained within the RFP, and, therefore, is a “qualified application” within the meaning of Education Law § 2852(9-a)(d) that should be submitted to the Board of Regents for approval.

The Institute developed the 2023 RFP “in a manner that facilitate[d] a thoughtful review of charter school applications, consider[ed] the demand for charter schools by the community, and s[ought] to locate charter schools in a region or regions where there may be a lack of alternatives and access to charter schools would provide new alternatives within the local public education system that would offer the greatest educational benefit to students,” in accordance with Education Law § 2852 (9-a)(b). The Institute also posted the draft 2023 RFP for public comment and responded to same.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposal under consideration including academic and fiscal soundness, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposal based on the criteria set forth in the RFP. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team and the proposed board of trustees.

As of October 4, 2023, there are 14 charters available for the SUNY Trustees and Board of Regents to approve in New York City.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

Kwenda’s lead applicant, Christina Perry, developed the proposal as a fellow with Building Excellent Schools (“BES”), a nationally recognized organization that identifies, recruits, and supports emerging school leaders in developing and starting charter schools in high need areas nationwide. BES will provide ongoing support in the areas of leadership, operations, organizational capacity, governance, and school design throughout the school’s planning year as well as its first two years of operation. Additionally, if authorized, Kwenda will receive financial support from BES in the amount of \$50,000 to offset costs associated with school startup.

Kwenda aims to provide a high quality, all girls elementary school option to the residents of the East Flatbush, Flatbush, and Flatlands neighborhoods of Brooklyn. As detailed below, the school intends to address existing achievement gaps by, among other means, offering a single gender education model in a neighborhood where few public schools of choice offer that option, and implementing a rigorous Common Core Standards-aligned academic program in a highly structured and supportive school environment. Kwenda will draw upon curricular and organizational structures implemented at other high-achieving charter schools, such as the SUNY-authorized Success Academy Charter Schools and Springfield Preparatory Charter School in Massachusetts. Notably, the school recognizes the importance of infusing literacy throughout the curriculum, as well as the critical need to include ample social-emotional learning opportunities to support its female students in developing confidence, voice, and empowerment.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Kwenda mission is as follows:

Kwenda Collegiate Girls Charter School educates young women in Kindergarten – 8th grade in an academically rigorous, structured, and supportive community that prepares all students to graduate from college with the courage to lead.

All programming at Kwenda is founded on the following key design elements:

- **Confidence of Voice and High Expectations.** Kwenda is committed to centering girls in its school community so that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, or disability status, are held to the same high expectations and empowered with the supports they need to reach those expectations. The design ensures that Kwenda students will, above all else, achieve at the highest levels while simultaneously having their voices heard, affirmed, and valued. The model also ensures that young women are empowered with the confidence of voice to lead independent, self-determined lives.
- **Culturally Relevant and Gender Responsive Curriculum.** The school holds an unwavering commitment to the belief that a high-quality education – one that prepares every young woman with the knowledge and skills necessary to graduate from the college of her choice – is not only a fundamental right but a key lever in ensuring the upward economic mobility of women and girls. Studies continue to show the economic empowerment of women and girls drives a litany of gender equality indicators including decreased rates of domestic violence, increased political representation for women, and even stronger educational outcomes for future generations. Kwenda believes that young women deserve a fair shot at leading self-determined lives of promise and opportunity.

- **High Quality Teaching.** To fulfill this urgent mission, Kwenda’s teachers must be able to deliver expertly crafted daily lessons, recognize and address student misunderstanding, and use data to inform instruction. The school also recognizes how implicit bias and insecure relationships negatively impact students, particularly young women of color. Kwenda’s approach to teacher development is two-fold: supporting teachers in both pedagogical and content practice as well as intentional development around relationship building and developing emotional intelligence. The school will intentionally invest in its teachers and their development to ensure that every Kwenda student has a teacher of the highest quality leading her classroom.
- **Focus on Literacy.** Kwenda believes that a school, by providing a strong foundation in literacy, can wildly transform life outcomes for young women, particularly those from traditionally marginalized communities. The school’s approach to literacy instruction is modeled after the proven practices of high-performing charter schools in New York City and across the country including Springfield Preparatory Charter School in Springfield, MA; Vista College Preparatory Charter School in Nashville, TN; and, the SUNY-authorized Excellence Girls Charter School (“Excellence Girls”) in New York City. In the lower elementary academy students will have 180 minutes of literacy daily, ensuring Kwenda students are reading on grade level by third grade.
- **Focus on 21st Century Skills and STEAM.** A focus on these skills ensures that young women are poised to compete in a complex and interdependent global economy. The technology sector is among the fastest growing and highest paying sectors in New York State. Kwenda will provide parents and girls with an opportunity that is not available locally, with both an all girls school, and a school that focuses on STEAM. Students will be exposed to STEAM and design thinking through daily dedicated blocks, and at the culmination of each grade level, students will prepare and present a STEAM-focused capstone project.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Kwenda will offer approximately 185 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2025-26 school year will be on or around August 25, 2025, and the last day will be on or around June 18, 2026. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 7:50 A.M. and end at 4:00 P.M. Kwenda will provide students with more than 1,267 hours of instruction per year, a 41% increase over the state minimum of 900 hours for 1st– 6th grades mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5, and provided at the majority of schools within the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE” or the “district”).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The proposed head of school selected curricula based on an analysis of four factors: the curricula’s demonstrated outcomes, its proven effectiveness with similar student populations, its potential for alignment with New York State Common Core standards, and ease of access to curricular materials. The school intends to implement its academic program as follows:

English Language Arts (“ELA”) (Reading and Writing)

Kwenda will offer students 180 minutes of daily core literacy instruction (160 minutes on Wednesday) for a total of 880 minutes per week. The school will break literacy instruction down into readaloud, phonics, guided reading, close reading, and writer’s workshop for the early elementary grades, and add novel study and vocabulary instruction for the upper elementary grades. Kwenda will implement a literacy curriculum that draws primarily on the model developed at Success Academy Charter Schools, a SUNY -authorized high-performing charter school network in New York, that makes its curricular materials available online. Kwenda will also use the research-based Success for All phonics curriculum for the early elementary grades. Through these curricula, students will internalize foundational phonics skills, analyze fiction and non-fiction texts, develop text-based discussion skills, practice crafting text-based written arguments, and apply new vocabulary.

Mathematics

Kwenda will offer students 90 minutes of daily mathematics instruction (80 minutes on Wednesday) for a total of 440 minutes per week. The school will break mathematics instruction down into a core skills/math workshop block, and a Cognitively Guided Instruction (“CGI”) block. The core skills/math workshop block will draw on the several research-based curricula including TERC Investigations, EngageNY, and Eureka Math. This block emphasizes deep conceptual understanding of mathematics skills. The CGI block will focus on developing students’ intuitive mathematics problem-solving skills.

Science

Kwenda will offer students 40 minutes of daily science and STEAM instruction for a total of 200 minutes per week. The school will base its science program on the Amplify curriculum, a hands-on, inquiry-based program aligned to New York State Learning Standards. The school will also utilize an internally developed STEAM project curriculum as an extension of the Amplify lessons. Lessons will emphasize key skills such as coding and robotics to ensure that students develop the skills and exposure necessary to succeed in science and technology related fields.

Social Studies

Kwenda will offer students 20 minutes of social studies instruction four days per week for a total of 80 minutes per week. The school intends to implement an internally developed social studies curriculum that aligns to and builds upon the school’s core literacy components through non-fiction texts and writing activities.

Voice and Empowerment

Kwenda will offer students 20 minutes of voice and empowerment instruction four days per week for a total of 80 minutes per week. The head of school and dean of curriculum and instruction will work closely to develop a scope and sequence and lesson plans based upon the evidence-based Sisterhood Academy curriculum from the Sadie Nash Leadership Project (“Sadie Nash”). Sadie Nash has agreed to partner with Kwenda to develop this curriculum. This component will focus on understanding issues that affect women and girls, and developing students’ confidence and self-efficacy.

Intervention

Kwenda will offer students 30 minutes of intervention instruction four days per week for a total of 120 minutes per week. During this block, teachers will strategically design small group activities with higher levels of support for students who are struggling, and extension projects for students who are meeting or exceeding standards. This may include the use of blended learning programs available online.

Physical Education

Kwenda will offer students 40 minutes of physical education instruction four days per week for a total of 160 minutes per week. The physical education teacher will develop a scope and sequence of activities to ensure students develop an enjoyment for various sports and other forms of exercise while also internalizing the importance of health and wellness.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

Kwenda will build a school and classroom culture that is warm yet firm, where student expectations are clear and predictable so that teachers can focus on developing secure relationships with students based in trust and mutual respect. The school will use the evidence-based Responsive Classroom approach for its management system. The foundation for Kwenda's culture are the school's core values of community, curiosity, courage, compassion, and controlling your own destiny. Students will begin and end each school day by participating in a whole class meeting where teachers reinforce school values and deliver lessons aimed at developing voice and empowerment.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

During Year 1, the head of school will have primary responsibility for school leadership and management. A dean of curriculum and instruction, half-time dean of student supports, operations manager, and social worker will support the head of school in their respective areas of expertise. The dean of curriculum and instruction will manage the majority of instructional staff with the exception of special education teachers, who will report directly to the head of school. In Year 2, a director of operations will join the leadership team to oversee the growing operational needs of the school. By Year 5, the head of school will oversee a leadership team that includes two directors of curriculum and instruction, a director of operations, a dean of student supports, a dean of empowerment and culture, and a leader-in-residence. Kwenda's organizational charts include clear lines of reporting and indicate that the school will have the organizational capacity necessary to sustain a high-performing program.

GOVERNANCE

The by-laws of Kwenda indicate that the proposed education corporation board will consist of no fewer than seven and no more than 15 voting members. The current members of the proposed board of trustees are set forth below:

1. Nisha Dass, Board Chair

Ms. Dass is an organizational development consultant working in the nonprofit, government, and private sectors. Currently, she operates her own consulting firm, and has also held leadership positions at Educators for Excellence and Away Travel. Ms. Dass began her career teaching middle school mathematics in the South Bronx. She obtained her bachelor of arts from the University of California – Berkeley. She is the proud alumna of an all girls school.

2. Emmanuel Depas, Board Vice-Chair

Mr. Depas is managing attorney and founder of the Law Office of Emmanuel Depas, Esq.. A Brooklyn native, Mr. Depas has over 15 years of experience in immigration, intellectual property, and criminal defense practice. Mr. Depas launched the Haitian American Lawyers Association of New York in 2013, hosting legal clinics assisting recent immigrants. Mr. Depas obtained his juris doctorate from Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University and bachelor of arts from Stony Brook University.

3. Femi Faoye, Treasurer

Mr. Faoye is the vice president and head of real estate transactions at WeWork. A Brooklyn resident raised in Flatbush and an alumnus of an all boys high school, Mr. Faoye is the co-founder of Developing Responsible Economically Advanced Model Citizens, a New York City-based financial education and advocacy organization. He obtained his master of business administration degree from Cornell University and bachelor of arts from Trinity College.

4. Jordan Hardy, Secretary

Ms. Hardy is the principal at Achievement First Aspire Elementary Charter School, which is authorized by the SUNY Trustees, where she previously was an academic dean. A resident of Brooklyn, Ms. Hardy is an adjunct professor at Relay School of Education. Ms. Hardy began as a teacher with Teach For America in Atlanta, GA. She obtained her bachelor of arts degree from Duke University.

5. Nicia Fullwood, Trustee

Ms. Fullwood is the head of school of Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy Charter School (“BELA”), an all girls charter high school authorized by the SUNY Trustees. She is a former assistant principal for Urban Assembly Schools and has served students in Bedford-Stuyvesant for over ten years. She obtained a master of education degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education and bachelor of science degree from Southern Methodist University.

6. Audeliz Pollock, Trustee

Mr. Pollock is an asset manager at Civic Builders, where he is responsible for monitoring operations of all Civic Builders school buildings. He previously was responsible for a development portfolio of low income housing tax credit properties worth \$100M at Riverside Capital. Mr. Pollock obtained his master of business administration degree in finance from New York University Stern School of Business and bachelor of science degree from Rutgers University.

7. Andre Sigourney, Trustee

Mr. Sigourney is a vice president of leasing at Sky Harbour Group, LLC where he manages the leasing team. Mr. Sigourney began his real estate career in Brooklyn as managing director at CPEX Real Estate brokering more than 50 transactions valued at over \$225 million. Mr. Sigourney spent five years in Costa Rica founding a school for the community of Coronado. He obtained a bachelor of arts degree from Syracuse University.

8. Lauren Sills, Trustee

Ms. Sills is an operations leader at the National Basketball Association Foundation. A Brooklyn resident, Ms. Sills was previously a senior manager at the Nike Foundation for Social and Community Impact. She began her career as a special education teacher in Los Angeles, California. She obtained a master of arts degree from Loyola Marymount University and bachelor of arts degree from Spelman College.

9. Kristin Hodgson, Trustee

Ms. Hodgson has nearly twenty years of experience in marketing and communications, and was most recently vice president of marketing for Teachers Pay Teachers. Ms. Hodgson previously held leadership roles in communications and marketing at Meetup and Teach for America. She obtained a bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University.

10. Hansini Sharma, Trustee

Ms. Sharma is a practice lead at Acquis Consulting Group. She previously worked in business development at Switchfly. Ms. Sharma obtained a master of business administration degree from New York University Stern School of Business and a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

11. Felicia Winder, Trustee

Ms. Winder is associate general counsel at Hofstra University with nearly ten years of experience in practicing law. Ms. Winder obtained a juris doctor degree from the Deane School of Law at Hofstra University and a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Delaware.

12. Katherine Zapata, Trustee

Ms. Zapata is the deputy director of Education Reform Now New York, and has worked in several positions in advocacy and government affairs, including as an Assistant to the Queens Borough President for policy analysis. Ms. Zapata obtained a master of arts degree and a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Denver.

FACILITIES

The founding team will inquire with the NYCDOE regarding an appropriate public facility where Kwenda can co-locate with the support of the community. If no appropriate space is available due to school utilization in CSD 22, Kwenda will seek rental assistance to lease a private facility in the school's target geography. The founding team has reviewed several options for private space and will continue to search for suitable options. Many community stakeholders, both within CSD 17 and CSD 22, have encouraged the founding team to seek a private facility. The founding team honors these concerns and continues to review options for private space within its target geography.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of Kwenda on the district is summarized below.

Charter Year	A. Expected Number of Students	B. Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid	C. Projected Per Pupil Revenue (AxB)	D. Other District Revenue (SPED, Food Service, Grants, etc.)	E. Total Project Funding from District to Charter School (C+D)	F. New York City School District Budget	G. Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2020-21)	108	17,626	1,903,608	672,865	2,576,473	37,500,000,000	0.01%
Year 5 (2024-25)	324	17,626	5,710,824	1,631,390	7,342,214	37,500,000,000	0.02%

*The NYCDOE budget was derived from the [NYCDOE's website](#).

The Institute finds that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, public charter, public district, and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will be minimal. In the event that the school opens with a slightly higher enrollment, the Institute has determined that the fiscal impact of the proposed school on the district, public charter, public district, and nonpublic schools in the same geographic area will also be minimal.

The Institute reviewed the school's proposed startup and fiscal plans and supporting evidence for each year of the proposed charter term. The Institute finds the budgets and fiscal plans are sound and that sufficient startup funds will be available to the new charter school.

Kwenda will have the financial support of BES in the form of a \$50,000 grant of startup funds for the planning year. BES also provides ongoing support and mentoring as the school grows.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal, and the proposal was posted on the Institute's website for public review. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school for October 10, 2023, and will provide the Institute with a summary of comments made at the hearing. Should the district make the summary of public comments available prior to the October 12, 2023 Committee meeting, the Institute will share the information with members of the Committee at that time. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. Additional information about public comments is provided in Appendix A.

PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a) requires authorizers to establish a scoring rubric and grant priority to applications meeting both statutory and authorizer standards. The purpose of the preference criteria is to prioritize proposals in the event that the number of proposals meeting the SUNY Trustees' requirements exceeds the maximum number of charters to be issued. The RFP identified the minimum eligibility requirements and mandated preference criteria required by Education Law § 2852(9-a), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY's additional criteria.

In accordance with the 2023 RFP, applications approved pursuant to the 2019 RFP that have not yet received a charter shall receive a new preference score pursuant to the criteria in the 2023 RFP. These previously approved applications will receive up to 30 additional preference points in descending order consistent with the scores they received based on the 2019 preference scoring criteria. For example, the highest-scoring application based on the 2019 preference scoring criteria will receive 30 additional preference points, the second highest-scoring will receive 29 additional preference points, and so on. The Kwenda proposal met the eligibility requirements, as evidenced by the following:

- the proposal was sufficiently complete, i.e., it included a Transmittal and Summary form, Proposal Summary, and responses to all RFP requests as prescribed by the Institute;

- the proposal included a viable plan to meet the enrollment and retention targets established by the SUNY Trustees for students with disabilities, ELLs, and students who are eligible to participate in the FRPL program (as detailed in Request 5); and,
- the proposal provided evidence of public outreach that conforms to the Act and the process prescribed by the SUNY Trustees for the purpose of soliciting and incorporating community input regarding the proposed charter school and its academic program (as detailed in Request 4).

As Kwenda’s proposal submission met the eligibility criteria, the Institute’s evaluation continued with a full review of the proposal, an interview of the application team and proposed board of trustees, and requests for clarification and/or amendments to the proposal. The review process then continued with an evaluation of the proposal in relation to the nine Preference Criteria contained in the RFP for which proposals can earn credit as described in the RFP’s Preference Scoring Guidance. The Preference Criteria, which in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the demonstration of the following in compliance with Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii):

- increasing student achievement and decreasing student achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics;
- increasing high school graduation rates and focusing on serving specific high school student populations including, but not limited to, students at risk of not obtaining a high school diploma, re-enrolled high school drop-outs, and students with academic skills below grade level;
- focusing on the academic achievement of middle school students and preparing them for a successful transition to high school;
- utilizing high-quality assessments designed to measure a student’s knowledge, understanding of, and ability to apply critical concepts through the use of a variety of item types and formats;
- increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- partnering with low-performing public schools in the area to share best educational practices and innovations;
- demonstrating the management and leadership techniques necessary to overcome initial start-up problems to establish a thriving, financially viable charter school; and,
- demonstrating the support of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located and the intent to establish an ongoing relationship with such school district.

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a)(b)(i-ii), (g), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the application for one new charter as proposed. Kwenda Collegiate Girls Charter School earned a score of 48.75 preference points out of a maximum of 75.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the updated proposal to establish Kwenda Collegiate Girls Charter School to open in August 2025.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH OCTOBER 4, 2023

On or about August 18, 2023 in accordance with Education Law § 2857(1), the Institute notified the district as well as public and private schools in the same geographic area of the proposed school about receipt of the proposal to establish Kwenda. The notice reminded the district that New York State Commissioner of Education's regulations require the school district to hold a public hearing within 30 days of the notice for each new charter application. The district scheduled a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school for October 10, 2023, and will provide the Institute with a summary of comments made at the hearing. Should the district make the summary of public comments available prior to the October 12, 2023 Committee meeting, the Institute will share the information with members of the Committee at that time. A redacted copy of the Kwenda proposal was also posted [on the Institute's website](#) for public review .

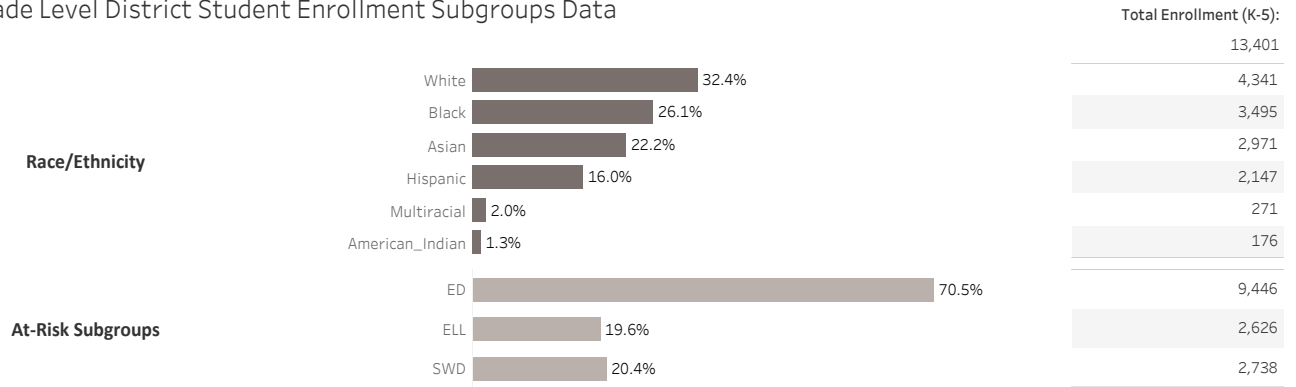
The Institute received independent public comments in the form of letters of support for Kwenda from several elected officials and organizations, including State Senator Kevin Parker; Kenneth Mbonu, President of the Flatbush Junction Business Improvement District; Miriam Raccah, CEO of the Black Latinx Asian Charter Collaborative; Sofia Mohammad, CEO of Black Girls Code; and Emily Kim, CEO of Zeta Charter Schools. The Institute also received letters of support from several individual community members and Brooklyn residents. All of the letters express their support for the founding team and school model.

To date, the Institute has not received any direct comments pertaining to the proposed school.

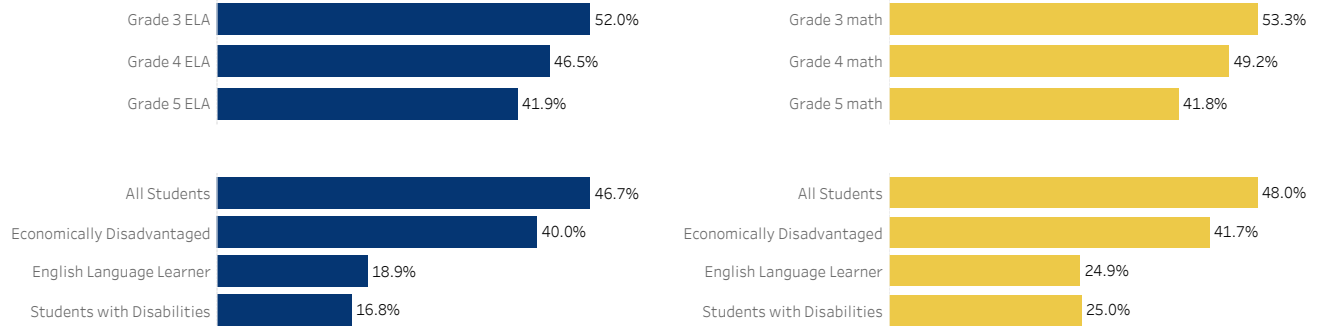
APPENDIX B: DISTRICT INFORMATION

CSD 22 Elementary School Grades Demographics 2021-22

Grade Level District Student Enrollment Subgroups Data



CSD 22 Elementary School Grades ELA and Math Proficiency 2021-22





Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

www.newyorkcharters.org

H. Carl McCall SUNY Building
353 Broadway

Albany, New York 12246

518-445-4250