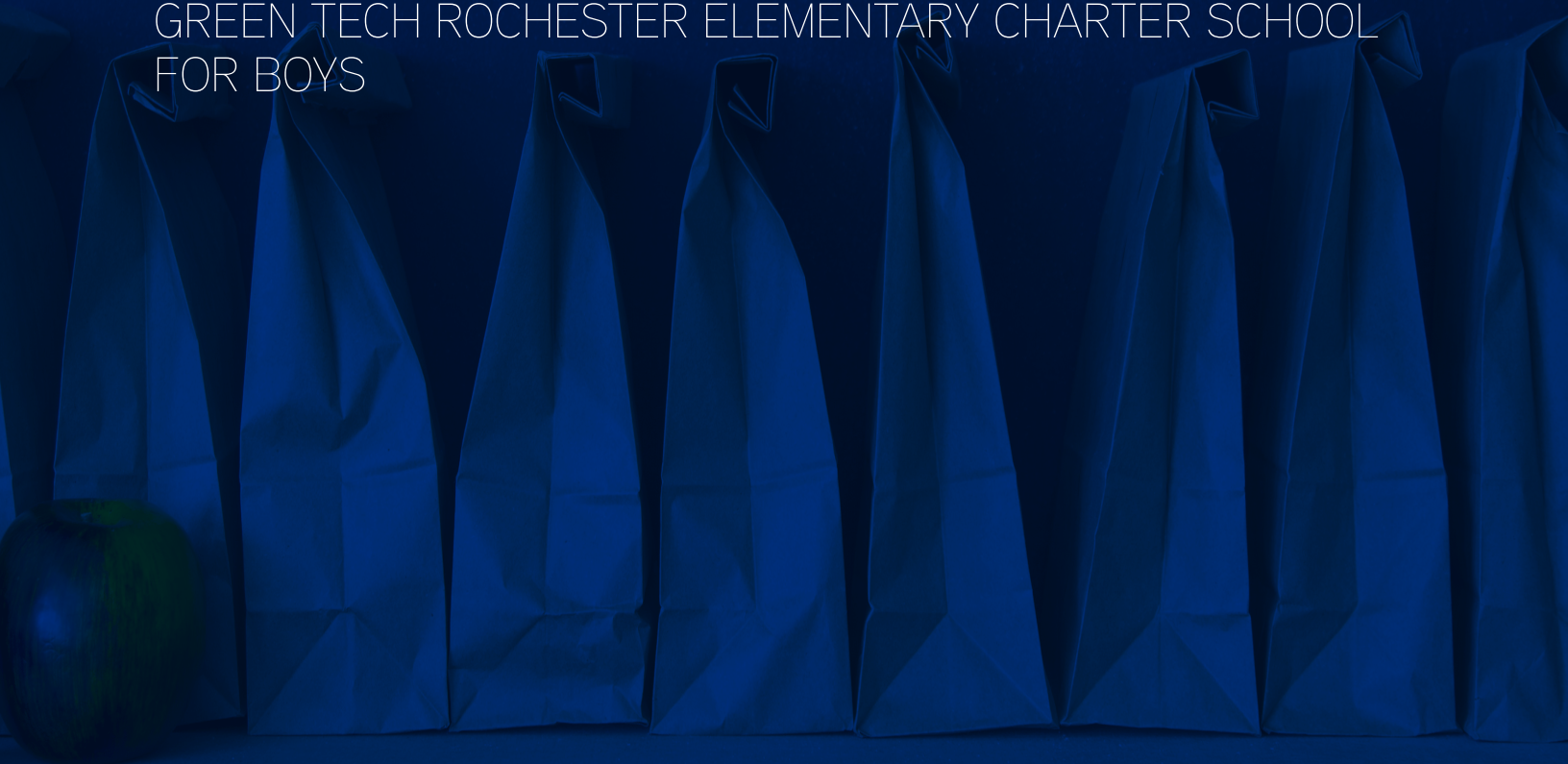




SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH
GREEN TECH ROCHESTER ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL
FOR BOYS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant submitted the proposal to establish Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boys (“Green Tech Rochester”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on June 3, 2024 in response to the Institute’s [2024 Request for Proposals \(the “RFP”\)](#) released on behalf of the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”) on December 6, 2023. The Institute makes copies of applications [available on its website](#).

Green Tech Rochester intends to operate one school to be located in a private facility in Rochester City School District (the “district”). If approved, the proposed school will open in August 2025 serving 150 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade, growing to serve 510 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade during its first charter term. Green Tech Rochester will backfill all seats that become open due to attrition in all grade levels.

After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (the “Act”), the Institute finds that the proposal for Green Tech Rochester 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 proposal to establish Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boys.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINDINGS

| 2

PREFERENCE
SCORING

| 9

BACKGROUND &
DESCRIPTION

| 3

CONCLUSION &
RECOMMENDATIONS

| 9

NOTIFICATION &
PUBLIC COMMENTS

| 8

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):
 - appropriate policies and procedures for the provision of services and programs for students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”);
 - the required policies addressing student discipline, personnel matters, and health services;
 - an admissions policy that complies with the Act and federal law;
 - the inclusion of the bylaws for governing the education corporation’s board of trustees; and,
 - an analysis of the projected fiscal and programmatic impact of the charter 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):
 - an educational program that meets or exceeds the state performance standards;
 - a culture of self-evaluation and accountability at both the administrative and board level;
 - the student achievement goals articulated by the applicant;
 - appropriate staffing plan;
 - a sound mission statement;
 - a comprehensive assessment plan;
 - sound start-up, 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;
 - descriptions of programmatic and independent fiscal audits, with fiscal audits occurring at least annually;
 - a school calendar and school day schedule that provide at least as much instruction time during the school year as required of other public schools; and,
 - 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):
 - a dedicated daily Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (“STEM”) course designed to develop knowledge and problem solving skills,
 - a program that provides one of the only single gender tuition free elementary schools in Rochester;
 - a diverse board with expertise in Kindergarten – 12th grade academics as well as strong ties to local community- and faith-based organizations; and,
 - a program that emphasizes strong relationship-building through a small school community, daily morning meetings, and explicit social-emotional learning (“SEL”) to support students’ emotional and behavioral development.

4. The proposed charter school would meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets, as prescribed by the SUNY Trustees, of 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 New York State Board of Regents (the “Board of Regents”) for approval.

The Institute developed the 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 RFP for public comment and responded to same.

The Institute conducted a rigorous evaluation of the proposal under consideration including academic, fiscal, and legal reviews. In addition, the Institute engaged independent consultants to evaluate the proposal based on the criteria set forth in the RFP. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute conducted an interview with the founding team, including the lead applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key Green Tech Rochester leadership. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

Green Tech Rochester seeks to offer an all-male, STEM-focused Kindergarten – 5th grade education, emphasizing social-emotional development, rigorous academics, and culturally responsive teaching. If approved, the school would open serving 150 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade, growing to serve 540 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade over its first charter term. The school seeks to serve primarily male-identifying students of color in response to gaps in achievement outcomes for boys and students of color in the district. For example, the overall proficiency rates of black and Hispanic students enrolled in the district were significantly lower than overall proficiency rates of white students in all grade levels as measured by 2023 3rd – 8th grade state exams in both English language arts (“ELA”) and mathematics. Proficiency rates for male students enrolled in the district were also lower than those of female students in all grade levels in ELA as measured by the 2023 3rd – 8th grade state exam. The founding team consists of community members and professionals with strong ties to Rochester who bring experience managing several charter schools.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Green Tech Rochester mission states:

Green Tech Rochester changes the lives of young men in the Rochester community. Green Tech Rochester's mission is to change the narrative for Rochester's Black and Brown boys. Green Tech Rochester will give its scholars every opportunity to build nurturing relationships, learn rich and challenging content, and gain the skills they need to lead lives of their choosing in our great city.

Programming at Green Tech Rochester will implement on the following key design elements:

- **Building Relationships:** Green Tech Rochester will foster a safe, supportive environment where students can thrive academically. Teachers, leaders, and staff will be expected to understand each student's interests, preferences, and unique personalities. The school will promote explicit community building through daily morning meetings and the integration of core values throughout the school day.
- **Delivery of Teaching and Learning:** Green Tech Rochester will prioritize the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning, focusing on fundamental literacy skills and the science of reading. The school will implement research-based practices across all subjects, including math, science, social studies, art, and physical education, with an emphasis on understanding by design for lesson planning.
- **Usage of Data to Deliver Instruction:** Green Tech Rochester will ensure every scholar remains on track and continuously improves through data-informed instruction. Teachers will provide regular and consistent feedback to students to drive progress.
- **Accountability:** Green Tech Rochester will cultivate a culture of accountability for both achievement and school culture. Classrooms will be structured with clear and consistent norms, expectations, and routines, ensuring that the entire school community, including scholars, upholds high standards.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Green Tech Rochester will offer approximately 180.5 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2025 school year will be on or around September 2, 2025, and the last day will be on or around June 24, 2026. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 8:00 A.M. and end at 3:00 P.M. Green Tech Rochester will provide students with more than 1353.75 hours of instruction per year, exceeding the required 900 hours for 1st – 6th grade as mandated by Education Law § 2851(2)(n) and 8 NYCRR § 175.5.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The academic program at Green Tech Rochester will be designed to provide a holistic and culturally responsive education tailored to the developmental and social-emotional needs of elementary school male students. The program will integrate rigorous academic content with a focus on literacy, math, science, and social studies, aligned with New York State standards. It will employ inquiry-based and student-centered learning approaches, leveraging STEM education and hands-on experiences to engage students. The curriculum will include structured lessons in core subjects, supported by SEL components

with a focus on character development. Additionally, the program will emphasize data-driven instruction, small class sizes, and co-teaching models to personalize learning and provide students the support to achieve academic success.

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

Green Tech Rochester will implement EL Education for ELA in Kindergarten – 5th grade, a program focused on comprehension, critical thinking, and inquiry-based learning. The school will supplement EL Education lessons with Wilson Foundations, a research-based phonics curriculum that supports early elementary students in developing foundational literacy skills. The school will also use Amplify Boost for literacy intervention lessons to target specific reading challenges.

Mathematics

Green Tech Rochester will implement Eureka Math across Kindergarten – 5th grade. Eureka Math is a research-based program aligned with New York State standards, with lessons designed to develop procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. To supplement Eureka, the school will implement Achievement First’s Story Problem curriculum to engage students in solving real-world math problems, fostering critical thinking and collaborative discourse.

Science

The Green Tech Rochester Science curriculum is centered around inquiry-based learning and hands-on exploration, aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The primary curriculum, Amplify Science, engages students as scientists and engineers through investigations, digital simulations, and collaborative research projects. The program integrates reading and writing to build domain-specific literacy, alongside activities that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving.

Social Studies

Green Tech Rochester’s social studies curriculum is interdisciplinary and inquiry-based, integrating literacy and critical thinking skills. The school will implement EL Education for core content in all grades, supplemented by InquirED Inquiry Journeys for 3rd – 5th grade, which focuses on using primary sources and developing critical thinking through research and evidence-based analysis. Additionally, the school will incorporate culturally relevant content through the Black History curriculum by Milton and Freeman.

At-Risk

Green Tech Rochester will employ a Multi-Tiered System of Support (“MTSS”) to provide research-based interventions and personalized instruction. Tier 1 interventions will focus on high-quality, differentiated instruction, while students receiving higher tiers of support will receive more frequent and targeted small group and 1:1 support. The school will comply with student individualized education plans (“IEPs”) and support students with disabilities with push-in and pull-out models, with instructional leaders enacting systems for collaboration between general and special education teachers. ELL students will receive instruction through the Sheltered English Immersion (“SEI”) approach, focusing on language acquisition alongside grade-level content. SEI emphasizes inclusion, data-driven instruction, and regular assessments to monitor progress, ensuring that all students receive the necessary supports to succeed academically and socially.

Music

Green Tech Rochester will use the MusicPlay curriculum, which follows a “Prepare, Present, Practice” framework. This curriculum teaches students the basics of music, including rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and expression. It incorporates a variety of global music styles and emphasizes active participation through singing, playing instruments, and listening activities.

Art

Green Tech Rochester will use the ArtsEd Washington curriculum for its visual arts program. This curriculum is hands-on and literacy-infused, focusing on teaching students foundational art skills such as drawing, painting, color theory, and shapes. It is also culturally responsive, integrating projects that reflect students' experiences and heritage.

Physical Education

Green Tech Rochester's Physical Education program will follow the OPEN PhysEd curriculum, which is aligned with New York State Standards. Students will learn motor skills and fitness fundamentals through activities such as running, stretching, and playing organized sports. The curriculum is flexible, allowing teachers to innovate and tailor lessons to the student needs and interests.

STEM

In addition to science classes, students at Green Tech Rochester will engage in hands-on STEM learning through labs using a modified Paxton/Patterson curriculum. This project-based curriculum exposes students to real-world challenges and STEM career fields, with labs focused on topics like alternative energy and criminology.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

Green Tech Rochester will implement an approach to school culture rooted in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports ("PBIS") model, a research-based approach emphasizing individualized behavior supports and recognizing positive behavior. The executive director will focus on cultivating this culture through training and professional development, while the dean of students will support and manage the school's discipline program. The school's culture will be rooted in high expectations for student and adult conduct. Green Tech Rochester will promote a structured environment where behavior and character traits are explicitly taught and consistently reinforced through content lessons. The school's approach to discipline, embedded in the student handbook, outlines behavior expectations and consequences, and identifies key character virtues the school will emphasize including responsibility, perseverance, self-discipline, courage, respect, and kindness. This comprehensive approach aims to create an environment conducive to both academic excellence and ethical behavior.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organizational structure of Green Tech Rochester will be overseen by the school board, which ensures academic success, fiscal health, and regulatory compliance. The executive director will be accountable for managing all school programs, academics, and operations, and reports directly to the board. The rest of the school's leadership team will consist of a director of instruction, who is responsible for instructional decisions and staff development; a dean of students, who focuses on school culture and student management; and a director of operations, who manages enrollment, transportation, and compliance, among other duties. Initially, the school will engage an outside provider for financial services, with a future director of finance overseeing budgets and payroll. All instructional staff report to the director of instruction, while the executive director will supervise the director of instruction, director of operations, dean of students, social worker, and director of finance.

GOVERNANCE

The bylaws of Green Tech Rochester indicate that the proposed education corporation board will consist of no fewer than 5 and no more than 15 voting members. The proposed members of the board of trustees are set forth below:

1. Dr. Fred Johnson, Board Chair

Dr. Fredrick Johnson Sr. is the associate professor and director of Black Church Studies at Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College. Dr. Johnson has held leadership roles in both the private sector and church organizations, including serving as Senior Pastor for over 16 years. Dr. Johnson earned a Doctor of Ministry in Urban Renewal from Northeastern Seminary, a Master of Divinity, an MBA in Finance from Rochester Institute of Technology, and a BM from Delaware State University.

2. David Mirsky, Vice-Chair

A career accounting and financial services professional, Mr. Mirsky is the former senior leader at a number of financial management institutions, including Mirsky Financial Management Corp. He is a licensed Certified Public Accountant, Certified Financial Planner, Certified Management Accountant, and Personal Financial Specialist. Mr. Mirsky holds a BS from the University at Albany and an MBA from the University of Rochester.

3. Dr. April Aycock, Secretary

Dr. April Aycock serves as the Office of Mental Health Director and Director of Community Services for Monroe County, and as an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Rochester. Dr. Aycock holds a Master's degree from SUNY Brockport and an EdD from St. John Fisher.

4. Dr. Rita Gaither, Trustee

Dr. Rita Gaither leads the nonprofit organization Pearl Resources, Inc. Dr. Gaither holds a PhD in Counseling/Leadership from Union Institute and Christian Leadership University, an MSc in Vocational Technical Education from SUNY Oswego, and a BSc from Rochester Institute of Technology.

5. Dr. Christine Richards, Trustee

Dr. Christine Richards is a principal in the West Irondequoit School District, vice president of the Gates Chili Central School District board of education, and an adjunct professor at Monroe Community College. Dr. Richards holds a BA from Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, an MEd from the University of Rochester, and her EdD from St. John Fisher College.

6. Mark E. Maves, Esq, Trustee

Mark E. Maves, Esq. is Counsel to the New York Public Welfare Association. He is also a Trainer/Curriculum Developer for the Silberman School of Social Work, Hunter College of CUNY, and a contracted legal consultant for the Monroe County DSS. Mr. Maves holds a BS from Niagara University and JD from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

FACILITIES

Green Tech Rochester seeks to identify a private facility in the high-needs “Crescent” area of Rochester. The school aims to secure a low-cost rental space to serve students from this community, with a preference for facilities offering at least 70 square feet per student. For the first year, GTR requires a minimum of 10,500 square feet to accommodate 150 students, including 5 – 7 classrooms, various offices, and essential common spaces. The founding team aims to find a cost-effective, flexible space, such as a vacant retail site or a shared facility with another school, to maximize funding for teacher salaries and provide necessary services and accommodations.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of Green Tech Rochester 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. Rochester City School District Budget	G. Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2025-2026)	150	14,316	2,147,400	34,800	2,182,200	983,599,049	0.22%
Year 5 (2029-2030)	510	14316	7,301,160	236,640	7,537,800	983,599,049	0.77%

The Institute finds that the proposed school’s fiscal impact on the district, charter, and nonpublic schools in the same geographical area will be minimal.

Green Tech Rochester developed a five-year startup budget with conservative revenue and reasonable expense projections for the first charter term. Based on the documentation provided, capacity interview, and well-rounded board at the time of the new application process, the Institute anticipates Green Tech Rochester will be fiscally stable over its first charter term.

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 posted it on the Institute’s website for public review. The district held a public hearing pertaining to the proposed school on September 3, 2024. The Institute carefully reviews and considers all district and public comments received prior to finalizing its recommendation. Any district comments and a summary of public comments is provided in Appendix A.

PREFERENCE SCORING

Education Law § 2852(9-a)(c) 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)(c), as described in greater detail below, as well as SUNY's additional criteria. The Green Tech Rochester 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 Green Tech Rochester'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, in addition to eligibility criteria and the overall high standards established by the SUNY Trustees, include the mandatory objectives set forth in Education Law §§ 2852(9-a)(c)(i)-(viii).

Pursuant to the RFP, in compliance with the requirements for new charter applications set forth in Education Law § 2852(9-a), the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the application for one new charter as proposed. Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boys earned a score of 22.40 preference points out of a maximum of 39. Based on this score and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the application for Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boys, which does not exceed the statutory limit in Education Law § 2852(9)(a).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boys.

APPENDIX A:

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH OCTOBER 2, 2024

On or about July 3, 2024, 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 Green Tech Rochester. 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. A redacted copy of the Green Tech Rochester proposal was also posted on the [Institute's website](#) for public review.

The Rochester City School District held its required hearing for Green Tech Rochester Elementary Charter School for Boy's new school application on September 3, 2024 and provided the Institute a summary of comments made. No one attended, spoke, or submitted written comments.

The Institute received evidence of support in the form of 19 letters from local community members and stakeholders. The letters expressed support for the school based on the low overall performance of the district and low achievement outcomes for black males in particular, a general need for more high quality school options for students and families in Rochester, the proposed school's focus on serving male students, and the experience of the founding team in managing charter schools. The applicants also provided 390 petition signatures from community members indicating their support for the proposed school.

APPENDIX B: DISTRICT INFORMATION

Rochester City SD Kindergarten through Grade 5 Demographics 2022-23

Grade Level District Student Enrollment Subgroups Data

Total Enrollment (K-5):

		9,041
Race/Ethnicity	Black	46.9%
	Hispanic	35.5%
	White	9.7%
	Multiracial	4.8%
	Asian	3.0%
	American_Indian	0.2%
At-Risk Subgroups	ED	91.4%
	ELL	17.8%
	SWD	18.0%

ELA Proficiency Grades 3 through 5 2022-23

All Students	14.1%
Economically Disadvantaged	11.9%
English Language Learner	4.9%
Students with Disabilities	4.6%

Math Proficiency Grades 3 through 5 2022-23

All Students	13.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	11.5%
English Language Learner	7.8%
Students with Disabilities	4.5%



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

www.newyorkcharters.org

State University Plaza
353 Broadway
Albany, New York 12246
518-445-4250