



Charter Schools Institute
The State University of New York

Summary of Performance

**REVISION TO CONVEY THE AUTHORITY TO OPERATE
EXPLORE ENRICH CHARTER SCHOOL
FROM
EXPLORE CHARTER SCHOOLS OF BROOKLYN
TO
MINISINK CHARTER SCHOOL**

REPORT DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2024

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SUNY Board of Trustees Charter Schools Committee (the “SUNY Trustees”) approved the proposal to establish Explore Enrich Charter School (“Explore Enrich”) on October 2, 2012. In June 2014, Explore Enrich merged with Explore Charter School (“Explore”), Explore Empower Charter School (“Explore Empower”), Explore Exceed Charter School (“Explore Exceed”), Explore Envision Charter School (“Explore Envision”), and Explore Excel Charter School to form the merged education corporation Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn (“Explore Schools” or the “education corporation”). In January 2017, at which time Explore Enrich had yet to open, the SUNY Trustees granted Explore Empower a short term renewal including a condition stating the education corporation may not open its two unopened new schools, including Explore Enrich, unless its operating schools met certain minimum student performance levels. However, in February 2019, the SUNY Trustees granted Explore Excel a full renewal; as part of this renewal, the education corporation agreed to work with the SUNY Trustees to convey the authority to operate its unopened charters, including Explore Enrich, to another education corporation or proposed education corporation. Explore Schools has agreed to a charter revision to transfer the authority to operate the charter for Explore Enrich to Minisink Charter School (“Minisink.”)

Minisink originally submitted a proposal (the “Original Proposal”) to establish a new charter school to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on January 9, 2019 in response to the Institute’s 2019 Request for Proposals (“RFP”), which was released on behalf of 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 Minisink 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 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 Institute implemented its established evaluation and review process to assign a preference score to each proposal recommended for approval. The Original Proposal for Minisink earned a preference score of 17.5 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 Minisink a charter at the time. The original Summary of Findings detailing the Institute’s recommendation to approve the proposal to establish Minisink is attached as Appendix A below.

SUMMARY OF REVISION

Minisink submitted updated materials to the Institute on August 6, 2024. If the proposed revision is approved, Minisink will open in August 2025 in a private facility in New York City Community School District

(“CSD”) 5.¹ Minisink will open serving 72 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade, growing to serve 216 students in Kindergarten – 5th grade over its first charter term.

Minisink will operate in partnership with the New York City Mission Society (the “Mission Society”), a nonprofit organization in operation for over 200 years dedicated to supporting individuals and families living in poverty. The Mission Society has deep and well-established roots in the community, currently serving approximately 400 Kindergarten – 12th grade students and families residing in CSD 5 through its existing programs. The Mission Society will leverage their longstanding experience and community ties to support Minisink with community outreach and student recruitment, finance, administration, academic programming, and back office supports such as benefits, payroll, and staff recruitment. The Mission Society owns a facility in Harlem, also called Minisink, capable of housing the school throughout its first charter term, which the Mission Society intends to lease to the school. Notably, the Mission Society will also subsidize rent for the school in its first three years of operation to help the school open in a strong financial position.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Institute reviewed updated academic program plans for Minisink and found the plans were thorough, sound, and likely to support a school that would improve student learning and achievement. This analysis was supported by, among other things:

- a unique school model featuring class sizes of 12-14 students, which will allow instructional staff to provide highly individualized supports to students;
- a commitment to progressive education rooted in experiential and hands-on learning supported by a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) programming, including a dedicated aquaponics lab;
- a focus on integrating literacy throughout the curriculum so that students become proficient readers, writers, listeners, and speakers; and,
- a unique two-year looping plan in which teachers and students would remain together as classes over two-year cycles to foster collaboration and trust between teachers, students, and families.

A full overview of the academic program is available in the 2019 Summary of Findings, which is included as Appendix A below.

FISCAL ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

The Institute reviewed updated fiscal plans and proposed startup budget from Minisink, and found the budget was reasonable, feasible, and conservatively planned. The accompanying narrative was thorough and detailed in explaining the assumptions in the proposed budget. Notably, the commitment of the Mission Society to enter into a lease for an existing facility and subsidize rent expenses during the startup period will support the school in opening in a strong fiscal position.

¹ Legislative language added to the Act in 2023 restricted the issuance of a *new* charter to an applicant(s) for a previously surrendered, revoked or terminated charter after January 2, 2015 but before July 1, 2022 in community school districts where the total enrollment of students attending charter schools in the community district exceeds 55% of the total public school enrollment. While CSD 5 currently exceeds this threshold, the Explore Enrich charter has already been issued and is not subject to this restriction.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

As part of the updated materials, Minisink provided evidence demonstrating ongoing community engagement and support in CSD 5 since the approval of the Original Proposal. Minisink’s founding team submitted evidence of support and demand in the form of letters from US Congressman Adriano Espaillat, State Assemblymembers Al Taylor and Inez Dickens, and leaders of eight community organizations including the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance, BOS Development and Village Harlem, Cornell University Cooperative Extension – New York City, Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, Harlem Grown, the New York Urban League, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, and Legacy Pathways: Innovative Educational Solutions for Schools & Business. The letters indicated their support for Minisink based on the long track record and impact the Mission Society has had on the community, the proposed small classes and individualized attention, the school’s intent to focus on serving students who live in New York City Housing Authority (“NYCHA”) facilities, and the proposed aquaponics lab and STEM focus. The founding team also submitted survey responses from 32 community residents collected in 2024 indicating they would be interested in enrolling their children at Minisink.

RECOMMENDATION

After a thorough review process consistent with the Act and including academic, fiscal, and legal reviews, the Institute finds that the updated materials for Minisink confirm and support the analysis and conclusions detailed in the original Summary of Findings. The Institute recommends the Committee approve the revision to convey the authority to operate Explore Enrich Charter School from Explore Charter Schools of Brooklyn to Minisink Charter School.

Appendix A: 2019 Summary of Findings and Recommendations to Establish Minisink



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH MINISINK CHARTER SCHOOL



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant submitted the proposal to establish Minisink Charter School (“Minisink”) to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (the “Institute”) on January 9, 2019 in response to the 2019 Request for Proposals (the “RFP”) (available at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/suny-releases-final-2019-rfp/>) released on behalf of the State University of New York Board of Trustees (the “SUNY Trustees”). The Institute makes copies of applications available at <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/request-for-proposals/2019-suny-request-for-proposals-round-1-spring-cycle/>.

Minisink intends to operate one school to be located in a private facility in New York City Community School District (“CSD”) 5 in Manhattan. The proposed school will open in August 2020 with 112 students in Kindergarten – 1st grade, and ultimately grow to serve 336 students in Kindergarten – 5th during its first charter term. If renewed, the school would seek to serve Kindergarten – 8th grade, and then open a high school, which would require an additional term to reach 12th grade if the school grows one grade per year. Minisink will fill all empty seats up to 12 students per class throughout the school year and in all grades.

Minisink will operate in partnership with the New York City Mission Society (the “Mission Society”), a nonprofit organization in operation for over 200 years with the goal of supporting individuals and families living in poverty. The Mission Society has a great deal of experience incubating nonprofit organizations and will provide the proposed school with a variety of financial, organizational, administrative, community outreach, and academic supports. The Mission Society owns a facility in Harlem, also called Minisink, capable of housing the school throughout its first charter term, which the organization intends to lease to the education corporation. In addition, the Mission Society will provide back office and organizational assistance with regard to benefits and payroll, staff recruitment, procurement, financial management, and fundraising. The Mission Society also intends to support the school in the development of its academic program through the provision of curricular materials, assessments, and intervention expertise.

After a thorough review process consistent with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended, the “Act”), the Institute finds that the proposal for Minisink 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 the Minisink Charter School.

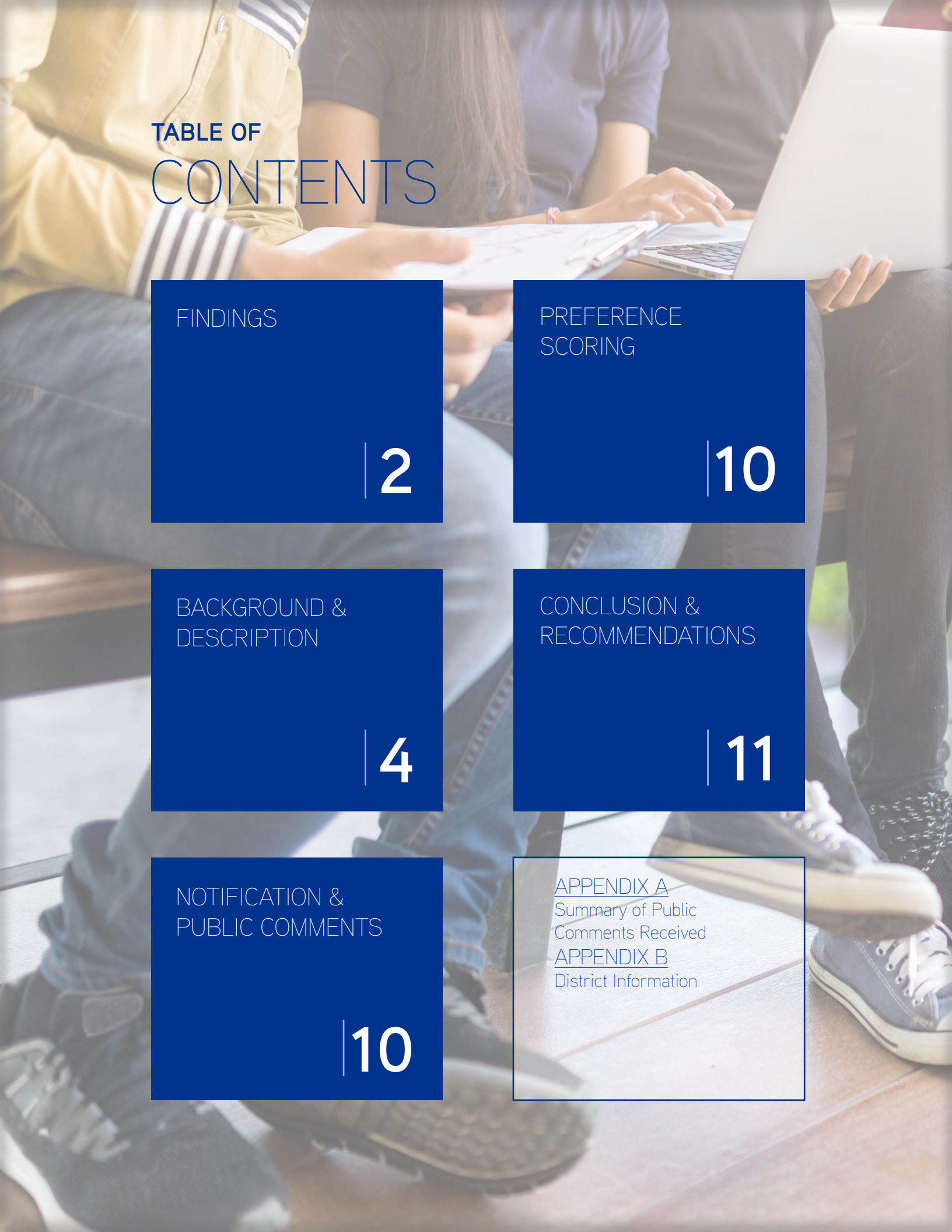


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FINDINGS

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 instruction 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):
 - a partnership with the Mission Society, which has deep connections and well established roots from its more than 200-year history in the Harlem community, as well as a strong financial and programmatic investment in the success of the school;
 - a commitment to progressive education that values experiential and hands on learning and features a strong emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking;

- a unique school model that features class sizes of 12 students, which will allow instructional staff to provide highly individualized supports to students;
 - a strong proposed board whose members collectively contribute a wealth of experience in areas that will support the school during its critical startup period, such as law, real estate, education, and finance, as well as long standing ties to the community; and,
 - evidence of a high level of community support and demand for the school that will enable it to maintain full enrollment and effectively serve its target population.
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 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. Pursuant to its protocols, the Institute conducted an interview with the founding team, including the applicant, the proposed board of trustees, and key Minisink leadership. Trustee Joseph Belluck, Chairman of the SUNY Trustees’ Charter Schools Committee, also met with the founding team.

Amendments to the Act in 2015 restricted the total number of charter schools the SUNY Trustees and the Board of Regents may approve to open in New York City. Since then the SUNY Trustees and the Board of Regents have approved all except for seven charters for that area.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

The Mission Society has been providing critically needed support to New York City families living in poverty since its establishment in 1812. During its over 200-year history, the Mission Society has overseen the development of a multitude of community services and programs, such as ward libraries that were a forerunner to New York City's public library system, an industrial boys school, an employment agency for women and children, a visiting nurse service, and trips to the country for urban children that eventually led to the creation of the Fresh Air Fund. Starting in the 1920s, the organization also began operating two camping programs, one of which was Camp Minisink, from which a building currently owned by the Mission Society and the proposed school take their names.

As a result of recent strategic planning, the Mission Society decided to focus its activities and resources on education as part of its efforts to reduce multi-generational poverty. An analysis of community need and the organization's resources resulted in the Mission Society's conclusion that a public charter school is best aligned with its mission to serve disadvantaged families in Harlem and would be the highest impact programmatic effort.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The Minisink mission is as follows:

To provide students with progressive, standards-based, experiential learning so that they develop academic skills, compassion, and self-esteem. We will inspire students to become lifelong critical thinkers with a commitment to social responsibility and intellectual inquiry.

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

- **Small Class Size.** Class sizes at Minisink will be as low as 12 students per class enabling teachers to individualize instruction and create cohesive classrooms.
- **Two-Year Looping.** Students will remain with teachers for two-year cycles. This additional time will allow teachers, students, and parents to collaborate and build trust.
- **Extended Day and Year.** Minisink's school days will be 90 minutes longer and its school years 20 days longer than those at traditional district schools.
- **Experiential and STEM Learning.** Minisink's academic program will emphasize hands on learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics ("STEM"). For example, students will learn sustainable food production in the Mission Society facility's new aquaponics lab.
- **Literacy Across the Curriculum.** In every class, teachers will help students learn to read, write, listen, and speak using specially designed and culturally relevant curricular resources.

- **Performance-Based Assessments.** Minisink is committed to a transparent, performance-based assessment system that documents and evaluates students’ mastery of standards. Digital tools such as MasteryConnect will help staff adjust instructional plans and communicate student progress to families.
- **Teacher Professional Development.** Minisink intends to provide teachers with ongoing training in aspects of the school critical to its success, such as Responsive Classroom and progressive education. Master teachers will mentor grade level teams and new teachers.
- **Community-Driven School Culture.** Through the implementation of intentional practices, Minisink will develop a school culture that encourages students to resolve conflicts effectively, work together, and challenge the status quo.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

Minisink will offer approximately 200 days of instruction each year. The first day of instruction for the 2020 school year will be on or around August 24, 2020, and the last day will be on or around June 25, 2021. Subsequent school years will follow a similar calendar. The school day will begin each morning at 8:00 A.M. and end at 4:00 P.M. Minisink will provide students with more than 1,290 hours of instruction per year, a 43% increase over the state minimum of 900 hours for 1st – 6th grade 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

Minisink’s academic program is based on evidence-based research, the professional expertise of founding team members gained through the operation of the Mission Society’s existing education programs, and numerous visits to high performing schools throughout New York City. The guiding principle of the academic program is a progressive approach in which students learn through experience, discovery, and hands on activities, rather than through procedures or rote memorization. Within a progressive education model, teachers aim to engage student interests and provide them with opportunities for self-expression in an environment rich with interesting and freely available materials. Progressive education also emphasizes student health and well-being, and tasks schools with providing adequate space for movement, good light and air, clean and well ventilated buildings, and frequent use of playgrounds and the outdoors.

Minisink’s classrooms will have 12 students each, which enables teachers to provide individualized instruction targeted to students’ specific needs. In addition, teachers will loop with students by remaining with the same cohort for two academic years, enabling teachers to deeply understand each student’s needs and build a high level of trust. Teachers and schools leaders will use a backwards design approach to curriculum development wherein the desired results drive the learning plan, as well as Universal Design for Learning (“UDL”), an educational framework based on cognitive neuroscience that emphasizes flexible learning environments in which students have more than one way to access content. Minisink will implement its academic program as follows.

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

In keeping with its key design element of literacy across the curriculum, Minisink intends to provide students with 600-690 minutes of weekly ELA instruction depending on grade level. Minisink’s ELA curriculum will encompass all aspects of language arts instruction including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The school intends to implement the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (“TCRWP”), which entails a workshop model during which teachers provide students with regular feedback on their work. Components of TCRWP include shared, independent, and guided reading and writing. Minisink will also implement the Wilson Foundations curriculum to provide phonics instruction for students in Kindergarten – 3rd grade. Wilson Foundations is a proven early literacy program that supports students in developing foundational reading skills, such as decoding, fluency, and comprehension.

Mathematics

Minisink intends to provide students with 365-370 minutes of weekly mathematics instruction depending on grade level. The foundation for Minisink’s mathematics curriculum are two complementary commercial curricula: Cognitively Guided Instruction (“CGI”) and Singapore Math. With CGI, students develop their own problem solving protocols and learn multiple ways to solve individual problems. In Singapore Math, students use manipulatives like blocks, counters, and visual representations of numbers to model mathematical thinking. Both programs support students to intuit their own problem solving algorithms and gain a conceptual understanding of mathematical processes, thereby making the abstract more concrete.

Social Studies

Minisink intends to internally develop a social studies curriculum that reflects and celebrates the diversity of the student body and incorporates the history of the Harlem community. Rather than offer a discrete social studies class, Minisink’s teachers will integrate social studies content throughout the subject areas. In keeping with the school’s progressive education approach, students will participate in interdisciplinary social studies activities that incorporate project-based learning, align with grade themes, and address social studies standards. Experiential student activities may include exploring the local neighborhood, interviewing community members, or building a model of their neighborhood.

STEM

In keeping with Minisink’s STEM focus, the school will offer 110-115 weekly minutes of instruction in science, engineering, and aquaponics. Science teachers will create an internally developed curriculum based on the Next Generation Science Standards that also addresses ELA and mathematics standards. To develop students’ engineering skills and expose them to the design process, Minisink will offer instruction modeled on its current after school programming in which students complete a design challenge in small groups. The facility Minisink intends to lease from the Mission Society comes outfitted with a state of the art aquaponics laboratory, through which students will have the opportunity to learn about hydroponics and food production and engage in interdisciplinary activities that provide hands on learning experiences.

Arts and Spanish

Minisink intends to offer a combined course in art and Spanish. A bilingual teacher will deliver instruction that integrates the study of Spanish language and culture with visual arts. Students will learn Spanish vocabulary, history, music, and songs and create artistic projects that celebrate Spanish-speaking culture. Starting in Year 5 of operation, Minisink will also begin to provide music instruction.

Social-Emotional Learning (“SEL”)

Minisink will provide students with 90 minutes of weekly SEL support and instruction. Minisink intends to implement a SEL curriculum based upon the program currently implemented at the Mission Society’s after school programs, called Mission: Success. The curriculum incorporates resources from two widely used SEL programs: CASEL and the Yale RULER program. Both programs support students in the development of social-emotional skills, such as self management and control, responsible decision making, and relationship building.

Physical Education

Students at Minisink will participate in a weekly physical education class during which they will engage in age appropriate sports, learn about making healthy lifestyle choices, and develop athletic, teamwork, and sportsmanship skills. Students will also develop cardiovascular strength, stamina, balance, muscle strength, flexibility, agility, and endurance while learning about different muscle groups and body systems.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE

Minisink’s adult and student culture will be based on its core values of MINISINK:

- **Mentor:** Share our knowledge and the lessons of our mistakes with others.
- **Inspire:** Encourage curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- **Navigate:** Embark on the journey of life with wisdom, passion, and joy.
- **Imagine:** Embrace possibilities and turn challenges into opportunities.
- **Service:** Show empathy and a willingness to help the community.
- **Innovate:** Demonstrate resourcefulness in an ever evolving world.
- **Nourish:** Feed our minds, bodies, and spirits as we strive for excellence.
- **Kindness:** Ensure that compassion and love are the abiding principles that guide us in everything we do.

As discussed in greater detail above, Minisink will implement a SEL curriculum based on resources from CASEL and the Yale RULER program, which encourage the development of mindsets and competencies necessary for academic success and overall well-being. Additionally, the school will use behavior management strategies aligned with Responsive Classroom, an evidenced-based approach that rejects punitive consequences in favor of those more aligned with the misbehavior. Teachers will also encourage students to use Accountable Talk, which helps students reflect on their learning and communicate their thoughts.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

In Year 1 of Minisink’s operation, a head of school will oversee all academic and organizational staff. He/she will have the support in the first year of a director of operations, dean of instruction, and dean of school culture. Teachers will report directly to the dean of instruction, who with the support of the head of school, retains primary responsibility for overseeing the effective implementation of the academic program. Throughout Minisink’s development, school staff will receive ongoing support from the Mission Society in the areas of curriculum and instruction, financial management, and human resources. The organizational chart includes clear lines of reporting and indicates the school will have the organizational capacity necessary to operate efficiently.

GOVERNANCE

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

1. James B. Peterson, Jr., Board Chair

Mr. Peterson is a principal at Pioneer Acquisitions with a background in real estate finance and management. He has a master of business administration degree from New York University Stern School of Business and a bachelor of science in engineering degree from the University of Michigan. He is also a member of the Mission Society's board of directors.

2. Elsie McCabe Thompson, Secretary

Ms. McCabe Thompson is president of the Mission Society. She has a background in nonprofit management, fundraising, community organizing, and law. Ms. McCabe Thompson has served on many boards including four public and private pre-Kindergarten through graduate school boards. She is a resident of Harlem and the mother of three adult children. Ms. McCabe Thompson earned a bachelor's degree from Barnard College and a juris doctorate from Harvard Law School.

3. Michael Haggen, Trustee

Mr. Haggen is the chief academic officer at Scholastic Education. He has an extensive background in education, management, research and evaluation, community engagement, and school turnaround. He is a resident of Harlem and CSD 5 and speaks six of the languages spoken in the district. Mr. Haggen earned his bachelor's degree in managerial finance and economics and his master of arts degree in educational studies from University of Michigan.

4. Judge George Daniels, Trustee

Judge Daniels sits on the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York ("SDNY"). He is the most senior member of the SDNY federal bench and a respected jurist. Judge Daniels has a background in law, educational leadership, and school governance and has served as a school board member for over 30 years. He has lived in Harlem/CSD 5 for over 20 years and is the father of a Harlem school teacher. Judge Daniels earned a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a juris doctorate from the University of California Berkeley School of Law.

5. Timothy G. Little, Trustee

Mr. Little is the head of real estate at Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP and has a background in real estate, finance, and governance. He is committed to public service including over 15 years as pro bono counsel for the Museum for African Art. Mr. Little is a graduate of Harvard Law School and earned a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University.

6. Kenita Lloyd, Trustee

Ms. Lloyd is assistant secretary for intergovernmental affairs under Governor Andrew Cuomo. She has a background in government relations, fundraising, and community engagement. She was born and raised in central Harlem, is the mother of a CSD 5 elementary school student, and has served on the board of a CSD 5 school. Ms. Lloyd holds master of public administration and bachelor of arts degrees from New York University.

7. Yemi Benedict-Vatel, Trustee

Ms Benedict-Vatel is the board secretary and grants manager at the Franklin Lakes Education Foundation. She has a background in community organizing, nonprofit management, fundraising, finance, and education. Ms. Benedict-Vatel is fluent in Spanish and the mother of three elementary and middle school students. She earned a master of philosophy degree from Oxford University and a bachelor of arts degree in development studies from Brown University.

FACILITIES

Minisink has drafted an agreement with the Mission Society to lease space in the organization’s flagship Harlem building, also called Minisink. The building is appropriate in size and design to house the entire school throughout the charter term and already has classrooms and multipurpose activity spaces for an elementary school. In addition, the facility features a science lab with a new aquaponics system, full-size gymnasium, theater and dance studio, and commercial-grade kitchen.

Minisink intends to follow the official process for obtaining rental assistance including applying for co-located space. The founding team expects that due to the high utilization of buildings in CSD 5 and the unique requirements of the school design it is unlikely the NYCDOE will be able offer co-located space.

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Charter Year	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.
	Expected Number of Students	Basic Charter School Per Pupil Aid	Projected Per Pupil Revenue (AxB)	Other District Revenue (SPED, Food Service, Grants, etc.)	Total Project Funding from District to Charter School (C+D)	New York City School District Budget	Projected District Impact (E/F)
Year 1 (2020-21)	112	15,307	1,714,384	1,270,913	2,985,297	25,600,000,000	0.01%
Year 5 (2024-25)	336	15,307	5,143,152	2,495,397	7,638,549	25,600,000,000	0.03%

*The NYCDOE budget was derived from the NYCDOE’s website: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/funding/funding-our-schools>.

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.

The Institute analyzed the financial condition of the Mission Society and found it to be fiscally sound with the capacity to provide in-kind services to support the school in human resources, financial management and accounting, community engagement, academic program advising, and facility management. In addition, the Mission Society is extending a \$500,000 line of credit to the school in the case of lower than expected revenues or unanticipated costs.

NOTIFICATION & PUBLIC COMMENT

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 February 28, 2019, 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 March 4, 2019 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, or issued in New York City, in 2019. 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. (See 2019 RFP at 10 or Replication RFP at 9.) The Minisink 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 Minisink'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 dropouts, 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. Minisink Charter School earned a score of 17.5 preference points out of a maximum of 45. Based on this score and the other information and findings set forth herein, the Institute recommends that the SUNY trustees approve the application to establish Minisink Charter School.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its review and findings, the Institute recommends that the SUNY Trustees approve the proposal to establish Minisink Charter School.

APPENDIX A:

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

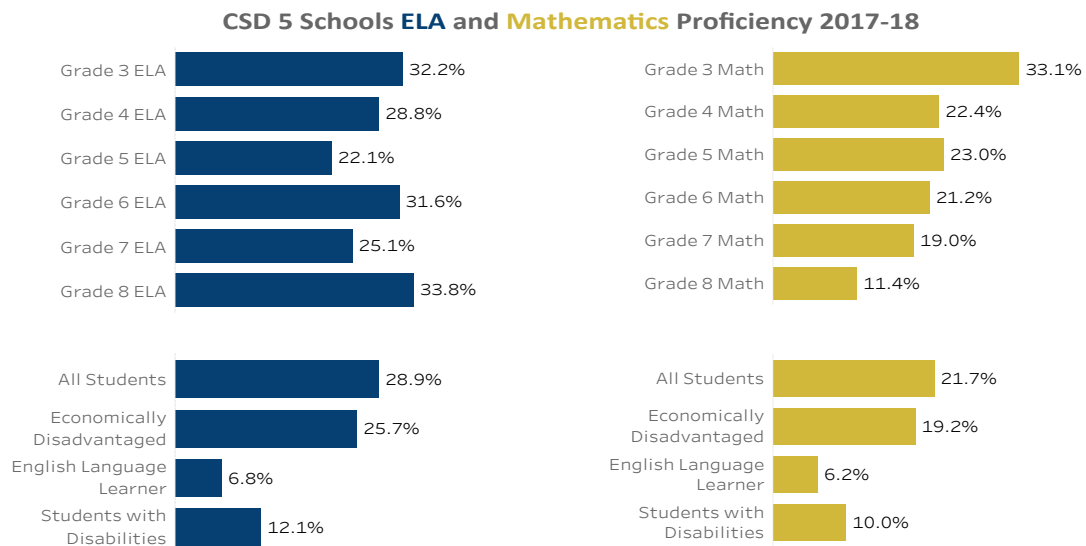
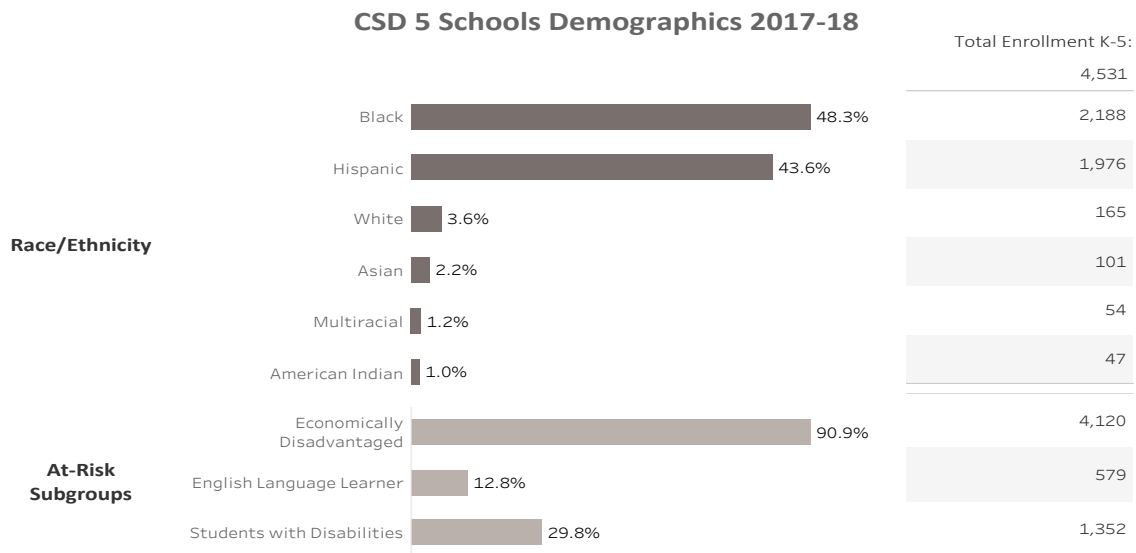
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE SUNY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THROUGH MARCH 1, 2019

On or about January 16, 2019, 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 Minisink. 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 February 28, 2019, 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 March 4, 2019 Committee meeting, the Institute will share the information with members of the Committee at that time. A redacted copy of the Minisink proposal was also posted on the Institute's website for public review at: <http://www.newyorkcharters.org/request-for-proposals/2019-suny-request-for-proposals-round-1-spring-cycle/minisink-charter-school/>.

The Institute received letters of support for Minisink from elected officials including State Assembly Member Inez E. Dickens and Congressman Adriano Espaillat, both of whom cited the school's small class sizes and the Mission Society's excellent track record in their advocacy of the school. In addition, Community Board 10 voted in support of Minisink at its December 18, 2018 meeting. The Institute also received numerous letters of support for the proposed school from educational organizations and institutions, such as Scholastic, Inc., the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society Museum and Library, and the National Centers for Families Learning, in addition to letters of support from numerous local business and faith-based organizations.

The Institute received direct public comments in opposition to the proposed school in the form of an email from a community member who cited a lack of community involvement and parent input in the development of the proposed school.

APPENDIX B: DISTRICT INFORMATION





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