

## **City School District of Albany 2024-25 Legislative Priorities Charter School Oversaturation**

In the current school year, 23% of the K-12 students enrolled in our city’s publicly funded schools attend charter schools. This makes Albany one of the most oversaturated cities in New York and the nation – and there is more expansion planned. While our school district values and encourages parental choice in a child’s education, the negative impact of this oversaturation is fiscally significant, especially in Albany where more than 60% of the property is tax-exempt.

Our district will send nearly \$40 million in tuition payments to charter schools in the 2023-24 school year. That represents 33% of the education tax dollars paid by Albany residents for the 2023-24 school year (\$122.4 million) going to charter schools – schools our residents did not authorize and over which they have no authority. This financial burden has grown by more than \$6 million over the past five years. We anticipate that burden will continue to grow in 2024-25 and beyond with additional charter school expansion planned, including continued grade expansion of the newly opened Nurses Middle College Charter High School and the potential that KIPP may seek to build another redundant school building in our city.

Oversaturation impacts the district programmatically as well as financially. All the redundant school facilities, staffing, programs and services that come with this oversaturation of charter schools take away from our district’s ability to provide high-quality programs and services for the nearly 80% of students who attend our city’s public schools.

Charter school oversaturation also continues to challenge the educational environment, creating instability for children as they move from charter school to charter school and back again, and from public school to charter school and back again. This destabilizes a child’s education and inhibits the ability for a child to build meaningful relationships to support their academic success. Moreover, Albany charter schools routinely enroll significantly lower percentages of students with disabilities and English-language learners than our public school district, failing to serve some of the most academically fragile children in our community. This is in spite of the fact that the state’s charter school law includes a provision that charter schools must enroll students with disabilities and English-language learners in proportions similar to the local school district.

New York’s charter school law also includes the following criteria for approving new charter school applications: “... *in a school district where the total enrollment of resident students attending charter*

(more)

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### **VISION STATEMENT**

*The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

*We will work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.*

*schools in the base year is greater than five percent of the total public school enrollment of the school district in the base year (i) granting the application would have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school or (ii) the school district in which the charter school will be located consents to such application."*

We strongly disagree that there is a "significant educational benefit" to students when the continued growth of charter schools threatens to destabilize the public school system in Albany. Yet, the state has continued to allow charter schools to expand in our community without meaningful consideration of the impact on students in district schools.

We strongly support S2292 (Mayer)/A6710 (Benedetto), which would require local school district approval of any new charter application, regardless of authorizer, when approving that application would result in enrollment of all charter schools combined in that school district exceeding 5% of the total public school enrollment of that school district in the base year. Any support or advocacy you can provide for this legislation, and any other measures that would limit the proliferation of charter schools and their exclusion of certain student populations in our community, would be deeply appreciated.