





TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Cosimo Tangorra, Jr. 

SUBJECT: Revision to a Charter Authorized by the Board of Regents:
Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School

DATE: March 9, 2015

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Regents approve the proposed expansion revision to the charter for Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by state statute.

Proposed Handling

This issue will be before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion and action, and before the Full Board for action at the March 2015 meeting of the Board of Regents.

Background Information

Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School (DPE) requests to change the material terms of its charter:

- To expand to serve students in grades 9-10 beginning in the 2015-16 school year.

The chart below provides some basic information about the school and the requested revision.

Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School

Name of Charter School	Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School
Applicant	Khary Barnes, Board of Trustee President
Management Company	Democracy Prep
District of Location	NYC CSD #5
Address	250 West 127 th Street, New York, NY 10027
School Opened For Instruction	August 1, 2012
Current Approved Grade Levels/ Maximum Approved Enrollment	Grade 6 through grade 8; 312
Proposed Revision	The Board of Trustees of the school has requested approval of expanding to serve students in grades 9 and 10, leading to a maximum enrollment of 540 in 2016-17.

Student Demographics: DPE Compared to District of Location

	2012-13			2013-14			2014-15		
	Democracy Prep Endurance	NYC #5	+/-	Democracy Prep Endurance	NYC #5	+/-	Democracy Prep Endurance	NYC #5	+/-
Economically Disadvantaged	85%	88%	-3	64%	85%	-21	62%	N/A	N/A
Limited English Proficient (Former & Current)	5%	17%	-11	8%	16%	-7	7%	N/A	N/A
Students with Disabilities (Former & Current)	28%	22%	6	25%	25%	0	23%	N/A	N/A

The NYSED Board of Regents approved and issued a five-year initial charter to DPE on December 14, 2010. The school opened for instruction in the fall of 2012, and its initial charter expires in the fall of 2017. Throughout the charter term, DPE will be required to demonstrate good faith efforts toward meeting the enrollment and retention targets. DPE is part of Democracy Prep Public Schools (DPPS), a non-profit charter management organization servicing students in New York. DPE is located in P.S. 154, a co-located public facility at 250 West 127th Street in CSD 5. The school is currently at full capacity with an enrollment of 312, serving students in grades 6 through 8.

DPE has requested an expansion increase to serve students in grades 9 through 10. Projected enrollment through the end of the current charter term (2016-17) is found below.

Projected Enrollment

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Total Projected Enrollment
Year 4 (2015-16)	108	108	108	108		432
Year 5 (2016-17)	108	108	108	108	108	540

The school believes that expanding to educate high school scholars is a necessary step toward fulfillment of its mission. DPE students typically arrive at school in grade 6 lagging significantly behind grade level in core subjects and in need of dramatic interventions to approach proficiency in ELA and Math. Democracy Prep's instructional approach ensures that scholars arriving well below proficiency in grade 6 make tremendous strides by the time they complete grade 8. DPE recognizes its commitment to these scholars extends beyond middle school, as the mission and educational program require educating students until they are accepted to the colleges of their choice and embark on lives of active citizenship. DPE believes that opening Democracy Prep Endurance Charter High School will provide the continuity necessary to ensure these scholars have ample time to prepare for success in college and become responsible citizen-scholars poised to change the world.

In its first two years of operation, DPE has shown growth in student academic achievement on the NYS English language arts (ELA) and mathematics exams. From 2012-13 to 2013-14, DPE ELA scores rose from 9.2% to 24.9% proficiency; outperforming the NYC District #5 in the second year of testing, yet underperforming the state mean. In math, student proficiency scores rose from 32.1% to 48%, outperforming district and state averages in both years. Democracy Prep Endurance tested only grade 6 students in 2012-13; grade 7 students were added in 2013-14.

	ELA			Math		
	DPE	NYC #5	NYS	DPE	NYC #5	NYS
2012-13: 6 th Gr	9%	12%	30%	32%	14%	30%
2013-14: 6-7 th Gr	25%	15%	28%	48%	15%	34%

Democracy Preparatory Charter School—another DP NYC middle school—has shown similar gains in both ELA and math.

Democracy Prep has been successful in operating one fully established high school - Democracy Prep Charter High School (9th-12th grades in 2014-15) - and one that is adding 11th and 12th grades within the next two years - Democracy Prep Harlem High School (9th-10th grades in 2014-15). Democracy Prep Charter High School's 2009 cohort testing results were above those of CSD #5 and the NYS cohort rates. Though the cohort graduation rates are still embargoed, Democracy Prep Charter High School

has reported that each member of the school’s first two graduating classes received acceptances to at least two four-year colleges or universities.¹.

2009 Total Cohort Results in Secondary-Level Subjects ²					
	ELA	Math	Global History	US History	Science
DP	93%	95%	89%	89%	95%
NYC #5	71%	75%	68%	69%	70%
NYS	81%	84%	78%	79%	82%

DPE’s financial performance has met authorizing standards. Based on a review of the 2013-14 audited financial statements, a corrective action plan has been requested for two management letter observations that will improve the schools internal controls over financial reporting.

Democracy Prep Endurance is a school in “good standing” and has never been identified for improvement under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Action (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Recommendation

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that the proposed revised charter: (1) meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations; (2) will operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) is likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes set out in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of Article 56 of the Education Law; and (4) will have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the charter school, and the Board of Regents therefore approves the charter revision for Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

Timetable for Implementation

The Regents action for Democracy Prep Endurance Charter School will become effective immediately.

Attachment

¹ All high school college acceptance data is self-reported by the school.

² Sources from the NYS Report Card