



**COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK**

September 29, 2020

**CEC15 Statement on
Success Academy Charter Revision Application**

CEC15 has received notice of Success Academy's application to revise enrollment for its Cobble Hill Charter School (SACH) which was previously authorized to serve 880 students in K-7. In January of 2019, the school was authorized to serve 416 students in grades K-4. They sought and obtained authorization to serve 536 students in K-4 and 9-10 in the 2021-2022 school year. Success Academy was not granted space for a 9th grade class and will be seeking a revision to remain serving 416 students in grades K-4 at this location. This revision also consolidates enrollment for four Success Academies: Cobble Hill SA, Williamsburg SA, Bed-Stuy 2 SA, and Harlem 1 SA, resulting in an enrollment increase of 118 students at Success Academy Harlem 1.

While CEC15 supports Success Academy's decision to decrease student enrollment at the Cobble Hill, Williamsburg and Bed Stuy 2 schools, we oppose an enrollment increase at Harlem 1 and we oppose the accompanying multi-district revisions.

Due to attrition and lack of parent interest over the last seven years, Success Academy Cobble Hill was never able to fill its charter mandate for an 880 seat K-7 school. In 2019, CEC15 supported the grade truncation of Success Academy's K-7 school and we were encouraged that the Charter was not asking for additional space. However, the CEC15 Charter Committee did not support the siting of grades 9 or 10 for a Success Academy High School. We stated, "According to the Office of School Enrollment, District 15 has no need for additional high school seats at this time. There are two high schools co-located with Success Academy at the Cobble Hill site and there are plenty of high schools in the immediate area, including high achieving Millennium Brooklyn. Furthermore, Brooklyn has no need for these additional high school seats."

Today's reversal on the addition of a 9th grade, points to the inadequacy of charter revisions to make substantial grade changes. CEC15 objects to revisions that result in a different classification of school: i.e. elementary, middle, or high school as defined in the regulations of the commissioner. Such changes should require a new charter application.

Additionally, concerns over space utilization continue as the two co-located non-charter High Schools at Baltic St. grow every year. Linger questions remain about whether SACH is efficiently utilizing the space they have for their K-4. Any unused seats must be returned to the district. The charter's enrollment chart for renewal years 2022-23 through 2026-27 projects a steep decline across all years in the 2nd grade. The



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cohort is reduced from 73 to 49 students and then increases again to 73 students in the subsequent 3rd grade. We have inquired to Carrie Gee at SUNY as to why this is, but have not received an explanation.

We also oppose the enrollment increase at Harlem 1. We have questions about utilization at 2M620 Norman Thomas HS. According to the SCA's Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report from 2018-19, Harlem 1 appears to be under-enrolled at 391 students with a target capacity of 783. The [Accountability Plan Progress Report](#) submitted to SUNY on September 23, 2019 shows 9-12 enrollment in the same year that is substantially more optimistic, but still well below the SCA's target capacity.

We have deep concerns about the purpose of increasing enrollment at a charter school with an abysmal graduation rate. The 26 Success Academy seniors who graduated from Harlem 1 in 2019 began as a cohort of 83. And a [2017-18 Accountability Plan Progress Report](#) shows this year's 2021 graduating class began 9th grade in 2016 -17 with 186 students at Harlem 1. By the following year there were only 52. What happened to 134 students in 2017?

Finally, not only do we object to the consolidation of enrollment from three different Brooklyn Success Academy charters into Harlem 1 located in District 2, but we object to this entire slate of revisions spanning 17 community school districts. Charters are designed and approved for specific school communities. The capricious shifting of seats between separate charters leads families to lose faith in the integrity of the initial charter process. SUNY should NOT hold a vote until there is a needs assessment performed in every district affected.

Revisions don't effectively take into account true district need and community interest. Charters that wish to have a stable presence in our communities must be made to complete a robust charter application in order to open different types of schools or in different locations. If SUNY wishes its charters to avoid unnecessary space conflicts and huge enrollment fluctuations it would behoove them to advocate for changes to the law that encourage greater accountability from the charter schools that they authorize.

For all of the above reasons, CEC15 does not support these charter revision requests and asks SUNY not to hold a vote.