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March 24, 2021

SUNY Charter Schools Institute
SUNY Board of Trustees
353 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

Re: BRICK Charter Schools Application

Dear Trustees:

On March 17, 2021, the Buffalo Board of Education received a presentation from the BRICK Education Network. Headquartered in Newark, New Jersey, representatives are seeking to establish two (2) charter schools in Buffalo, New York. BRICK has submitted one application to the SUNY Charter School Institute for this purpose.

After receiving the public presentation from BRICK and engaging in a question and answer period, the Buffalo Board of Education wishes to express, in the strongest terms, our grave concerns regarding the BRICK application. We strongly urge the SUNY Charter School Institute to deny this consolidated application on several grounds:

- 1. Applicants from BRICK were unable to identify a single unmet need by the Buffalo City School District to justify the validity of their application.**
2. When asked questions related to specific components of their application, BRICK applicants appeared unaware of the details contained in the submitted application. The Board of Education considers these two (2) examples alone as disqualifying:
 - a. When asked how BRICK's strategies for meeting FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) obligations would be different and more effective than that of the Buffalo City School District, applicants were non-responsive and unaware of the meaning of the term "FAPE" and the legal rights for students with disabilities implicit in the term. One applicant asked if this is a term related to "Free and Reduced Lunch". When the meaning of the term was explained and how a general definition was contained in their application, **it was clear that BRICK applicants were not familiar with the content of their submission to you.**
 - b. The Buffalo City School District is among the most culturally and linguistically diverse school districts in New York State and the nation. BRICK applicants were asked to clarify why their application only notes the Spanish language in a description of their outreach strategies, translation services, etc. They were asked if they knew approximately how many top languages are recognized in our City (10). Applicants were non-responsive. When asked if they could at least name the top two (2) other languages besides English and Spanish in our City (Arabic and Karen), applicants were non-responsive. **It is apparent that the applicants have no knowledge of even the basic demographics of the City of Buffalo.**

3. A Board of Education Member asked if BRICK applicants could share what they know of the District's strategic transformation plan, the *Education Bargain*. The *Bargain* has been noted in local, state, and national professional conferences and has been covered extensively by the media at every level. A summary graphic of the *Bargain* is also the homepage of the District website. The question was asked on the belief that any applicant interested in determining a level of institutional collaboration, measuring the effectiveness of the District to satisfy unmet needs in the community, or just curious about the priorities and values promoted by the City in which they seek to serve children, would be able to engage in basic conversation about the *Bargain*. Applicants were non-responsive and unable to express any recognition of the term, the *Bargain*. **This was alarming and notable as it was obvious that applicants had not even browsed the District website prior to arriving in Buffalo for the presentation. It's also indicative of the fact that the applicants chose not to meet with any Board of Education Members or the Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools.**

The Buffalo City School District continues to rise because of the *Education Bargain*. For example:

1. Early childhood grades PK-3 have reduced classes (18-24) to boost literacy and mathematics achievement;
2. Families across Buffalo neighborhoods have embraced and participated in 26 full-service Community Schools open six days per week;
3. Our students participate in enriched after-school programming five days a week at every school in our District;
4. Parents have a broad choice of 45 Schools in Good Standing across Buffalo in every grade band;
5. Students and families ~~at every school~~ have access to academic enrichment, social-emotional support and health services through our notable and long-standing partnership with Say Yes Buffalo;
6. Our professional staff have received nationally-recognized training in culturally responsive teaching and leadership; and
7. New innovative and re-imagined high schools are contributing to record graduation rates.

While the Buffalo Board of Education appreciates that a presentation was provided, we believe that the application—although very long but still underdeveloped—was written without the adequate involvement or knowledge of the applicants making application to you.

Additionally, as previously shared with the SUNY Charter School Institute, the Buffalo Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution, on September 20, 2021, indicating:

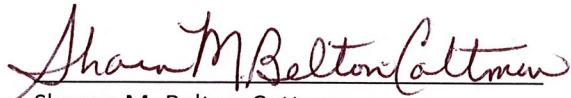
"...the City of Buffalo has now reached its breaking point. The New York State Board of Regents and the SUNY Charter School Institute can no longer saturate the City of Buffalo with more and more charter schools without children in other public schools, both traditional and charter, paying an unacceptable price in a harmful teacher shortage, reduction in services and supports, and unwarranted redundancy..."

March 24, 2021

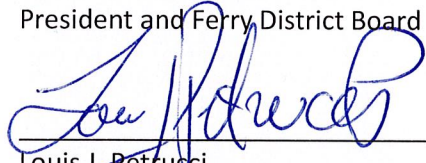
SUNY Charter Schools Institute Board of Trustees

Again, the Buffalo Board of Education respectfully requests, in the strongest of terms, that the application submitted by the BRICK Education Network be denied.

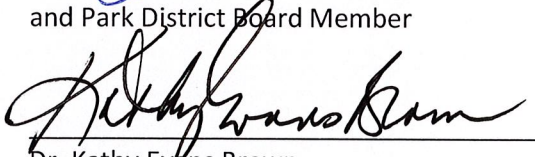
Very truly yours,



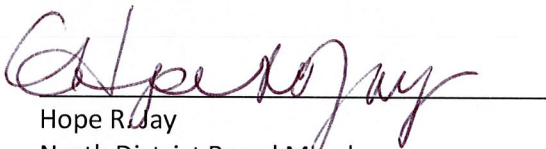
Sharon M. Belton-Cottman
President and Ferry District Board Member



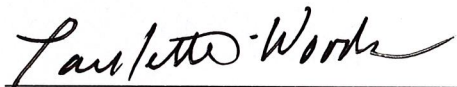
Louis J. Petrucci
Vice-President of Executive Affairs
and Park District Board Member



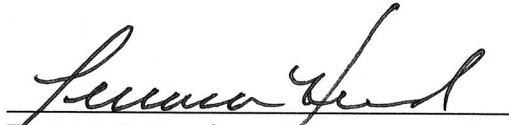
Dr. Kathy Evans Brown
Vice President of Student Achievement
and East District Board Member



Hope R. Jay
North District Board Member



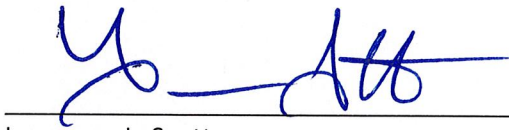
Paulette Woods
Central District Board Member



Terrance L. Heard
Board Member-at-Large



Dr. Ann R. Rivera
Board Member-at-Large



Lawrence L. Scott
Board Member-at-Large



Jennifer L. Mecozzi
West District Board Member