



**Submitted Testimony from Kyle Rosenkrans, Northeast Charter Schools Network
for the Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary and Secondary Education
January 27, 2016**

Good afternoon Chairman and Chairwoman and other distinguished members of the Senate and Assembly. My name is Kyle Rosenkrans and I am the CEO of the Northeast Charter Schools Network. The Northeast Charter Schools Network (NECSN) is a statewide advocacy organization for the 250 plus charter schools in New York State. These schools employ more than 11,000 professional staff, including nearly 8,000 teachers to serve 120,000 students throughout the state. The Network's mission is to support and expand high quality public charter schools in New York State. As the statewide membership association representing charter schools both large and small, independent and network-managed, we understand the urgency and need for support to all charter schools across the state.

NECSN supports the Governor's proposal to continue providing facility aid to new and expanding schools in New York City and to make permanent the calculation of rental aid. However, as the advocacy group for all charter schools in New York State, we strongly encourage the members of the Senate and Assembly to expand this policy statewide and make this facility aid available to all charter schools. Finding and affording a building continues to be the number one challenge for most charter schools throughout New York State, preventing many strong founding teams from ever opening schools, and preventing successful schools from expanding. Further, providing facility aid would allow charter schools to concentrate even more resources on students' instructional needs, including academic programming, technology for online statewide testing, professional development, and other initiatives of direct benefit to students. Right now, public charter schools both in New York City and across the rest of the state are the only public schools denied this basic investment.

NECSN also supports the unfreezing of the funding formula for charter schools in New York City, while continuing to provide supplemental basic tuition payments to other areas of the state in 2016-17. This funding scheme recognizes charters schools' important role in New York State. Charter schools have been shown to provide greater benefits to special needs and English language learner (ELL) students than traditional public school environments. A report just released yesterday January 26, 2016 by the Manhattan Institute illustrates empirical research from New York City that finds 74 percent of students with disabilities who originally enrolled in charter schools remained in that school as compared with 69 percent of students in traditional



public schools. Both the Independent Budget Office and the Manhattan Institute have determined through analysis of New York City charter school enrollment data that ELL students are more likely to remain in school when attending a charter school rather than a traditional public school. The Manhattan Institute found that 82 percent of ELL students who originally enrolled in charter schools for kindergarten remained four years later, compared with 70 percent of such students in traditional public schools. This empirical data proves the significant contributions charter schools play in reforming our education system. Continued movement towards appropriate funding levels, as codified in our enacting legislation, ensures the academic success of these special needs students who have demonstrated greater ability to thrive in charter schools.

State investment in district school students and charter school students should be reflective of the success of all students enrolled in their choice of school environment. We ask the Legislature to remain cognizant of the fact that funding reverts back to the original formula in 2017 for all charter schools and to consider the economic impact the discontinuation of the supplemental basic tuition will have on schools outside of New York City next year.

Governor Cuomo's continued support of charter schools in his proposed Executive Budget for fiscal year 2016-17 underscores the important role of charter schools in education reform in New York State. We fully support the proposal to allocate \$27 million in the Aid to Localities Budget in fiscal year 2017 to continue funding all charter schools statewide. This continued infusion of money will help provide stability to the operating budgets of charter schools in New York State and ensure the continued academic success for those enrolled in these schools.

Once again, I would like to thank the chairs and committee members for the opportunity to comment today on the proposed Executive Budget as it relates to charter schools statewide and I welcome any questions from the panel.