



TO: P-12 Education Committee

FROM: Angelique Johnson-Dingle *Angelique Johnson-Dingle*

SUBJECT: Revision to a Charter Authorized by the Board of Regents

DATE: March 27, 2025

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Betty M...*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents approve the revision recommendation for the following charter school authorized by the Board of Regents?

- **American Dream Charter School II** (Revision to change the school's grade span from K through Grade 5 to Grades 9 through 12)

Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by State statute.

Proposed Handling

The issue will come before the P-12 Education Committee for recommendation and to the Full Board for action at its April 2025 meeting.

Procedural History

The New York State Education Department (the Department) made the revision recommendation that is being presented to the Board of Regents for approval as required by Article 56 of the Education Law.

Background Information

The Board of Regents and the Department are bound by law, regulation, and Regents-endorsed internal policies regarding the criteria that can be considered in decision-making pertaining to the authorization of new charter schools, charter school renewals, and charter school revisions. Detailed information on these laws, regulations, and Regents-endorsed internal policies can be found in the Appendix.

Related Regents Items

American Dream Charter School II

Initial Charter:

[November 2018: Charter Schools: Initial Applications Authorized by the Board of Regents](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1118p12a1.pdf>)

Name Change Revision:

[March 2022: Revisions to Charters Authorized by the Board of Regents](#)

(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/322p12a2.pdf>)

Enrollment Decrease, Educational Philosophy, Program, Goals, Curriculum Model, Policies, Overall School Design, Mission, Vision, Key Design Elements, and Organizational Structure Revisions:

[December 2022: Revisions to Charters Authorized by the Board of Regents](#)

(<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1222p12a1.pdf>)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board of Regents finds that (1) **American Dream Charter School II** meets the requirements set out in Article 56 of the Education Law, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations; (2) the charter school can demonstrate the ability to operate in an educationally and fiscally sound manner; (3) granting the request to amend the charter 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) granting the request to amend the charter 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 **American Dream Charter School II** and amends the provisional charter accordingly.

Timetable for Implementation

The Board of Regents action for the above-named charter school will become effective immediately.

American Dream Charter School II

In accordance with Education Law, Article 56, **the New York State Education Department recommends that this charter school be permitted to revise its provisional charter to change the school’s grade span from K through Grade 5 to Grades 9 through 12.**

Table 1: Charter School Summary

Name of Charter School	American Dream Charter School II (ADCS II)
Board Chair	Luz Maria Rojas
District of Location	New York City (NYC) Community School District (CSD) 6 ¹
Initial Commencement of Instruction	Intent to commence instruction August 2026
Current Term Authorized Grades / Approved Enrollment	K – Grade 5 / 450 students
Comprehensive Management Service Provider	None
Facilities	652 W 187 th Street – Manhattan (Private Space)
Mission Statement	<i>The mission of American Dream Charter School II is to cultivate an environment that is welcoming and encouraging for English language learners (ELL) and immigrant students where learning and language development experience is supported. Our students will be promoted from the American Dream Charter School II and better prepared for the achievement of becoming bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. This model of instruction is designed to allow students to achieve academic success in two languages based on models that support language acquisition, both home language and new language acquisition.</i>
Key Design Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Language Program • Project and Experiential Based Learning • Culturally Responsive Instruction • Data-Driven Instruction and Assessment • Teacher Development and Support • June MiniMester (accelerated two-week course) • DREAM Advisory • Two-week intensive Teacher Academy
Recommended Material Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the school’s grade span from K through Grade 5 to Grades 9 through 12

¹ Twenty-five percent of all students residing in this district attend charter schools.

Table 2: Current Grade Levels and Approved Enrollment

	Year 1 2025 to 2026	Year 2 2026 to 2027	Year 3 2027 to 2028	Year 4 2028 to 2029	Year 5 2029 to 2030
Grade Configuration	K – Grade 1	K – Grade 2	K – Grade 3	K – Grade 4	K – Grade 5
Total Approved Enrollment	150	225	300	375	450

Table 3: Recommended Grade Levels and Recommended Enrollment

	Year 1 2026 to 2027	Year 2 2027 to 2028	Year 3 2028 to 2029	Year 4 2029 to 2030	Year 5 2030 to 2031
Grade Configuration	Grade 9	Grades 9 - 10	Grades 9 - 11	Grades 9-12	Grades 9 - 12
Total Recommended Enrollment	120	240	348	450	450

Rationale for Revision Recommendation

NYSED recommends that the Board of Regents approve the revision described above in the **Issue for Decision** section for the following reasons.

In October 2018, the Board of Regents approved and chartered the Education Unlimited Lyceum Charter School (EULCS) in NYC CSD 6. The school’s planned K – Grade 5 program was focused on dual-language immersion (English-Spanish; English-Mandarin), STEM, and experiential learning. However, the school experienced several years of organizational challenges and delays, preventing the school from opening for instruction. American Dream Charter School (ADCS), whose dual language mission was closely aligned to EULCS, partnered with the school. This collaboration eventually led to a restructuring of EULCS.

In March 2022, the Board of Regents approved a revision to rename EULCS the American Dream Charter School II (ADCS II). In December 2022, the Board of Regents approved revisions to the school’s mission, vision, key design elements, organizational/leadership structure, and total enrollment.

Over the past two years, ADCS II has made extensive good-faith efforts to recruit students for a K – Grade 5 dual language school in Washington Heights. However, per the New York City Public Schools [Spring 2024 CSD 6 Data Summary](#), from the 2018-2019 to the 2023-2024 school years, “elementary school-aged residents decreased by approximately 21%.” In addition, the number of charter schools in NYC CSD 6 offering K – Grade 5 has increased since 2018 when EULCS was first granted its charter. For example, of the nine NYC CSD 6 charter schools that include elementary grades in the 2024-2025 school year, only three of those included the full K – Grade 5 grade span in the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, at present, there are about 27 district schools in NYC CSD 6 that enroll students in K – Grade 5. As a result, ADCS II has been working to recruit students in grades K – 5 within a district that already includes over 35 other schools serving the same grade levels. Per the New York City Public Schools [Spring 2024 CSD 6 and the Manhattan High School Data Summaries](#), 27 percent of CSD 6 elementary students attend charter schools, but only 15 percent of high school students attend charter schools.

ADCS II is much more likely to succeed in recruiting for high school grades than for K – Grade 5, due to several strategic advantages. The leaders of ADCS II already run a successful dual language high school, ADCS, in the Bronx, from which they can apply their experience and expertise. High school students are also more independent and able to commute across the five boroughs, allowing ADCS II to draw students from a broader geographic area. In addition, none of the district schools in CSD 6 that include high school grades appear to have 100% open admission. These schools rely on other considerations such as a test, grade screening, language criteria, or “educational option,” which builds an entering class such that the schools “maintain a student body of one-third with the highest reading levels, one-third with middle-range reading levels and one-third with low reading levels.” By comparison, initial entry to ADCS II will be chosen exclusively by lottery, which may appeal to some families. Finally, none of the current charter schools in CSD 6 that include high school grades are standalone high schools, but they are other configurations such as K – Grade 12, Grades 5 – 12, or K – Grade 10. The opportunity for students to enroll in a charter high school in CSD 6, where all incoming ninth graders will also be new to the school, would be another unique characteristic of ADCS II.

The school’s trustees request that the Board of Regents approve a material revision to:

- Amend the school’s grade span from its current K through Grade 5 configuration to Grades 9 through 12.

American Dream Charter School (NYC CSD 7) has a significant demand for high school seats, further supporting this rationale. Last school year, the school received 705 applications for high school admission but was only able to admit approximately 30 students, which is less than 5% of applicants. This year, American Dream Charter School has already received 251 applications, and based on prior trends, they anticipate this number to double or even triple by August. Despite this overwhelming demand, admissions will be limited by the number of available seats. Given the strong name recognition and track record of American Dream Charter School (NYC CSD 7), ADCS II is also expected to attract a substantial number of high school students as well.

Approving this revision request will result in a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the school by providing a high-quality, culturally responsive dual-language high school program and a pathway to a Seal of Biliteracy. The school’s focus on experiential learning will also help students develop critical skills for their college and career readiness.

Approving this revision request is likely to improve student learning and achievement by providing a supportive educational community for students and establishing strong relationships with families. In addition, students will benefit from the social-emotional learning of their advisory program and explore post-secondary opportunities through their college counseling program.

Summary of Public Comment

The required public hearing was held by the New York City Department of Education on November 12, 2024. Three people attended and two spoke. Two were in favor of the revision and none were opposed.

The school provided evidence of community support for this revision by submitting five letters of support to the NYSED Charter School Office from community stakeholders.

APPENDIX
Laws, Regulations, and Regents-endorsed Internal Policies Applicable to
Board of Regents-Authorized Charter School Revisions

Statutory requirements pertaining to Board of Regents charter school decision-making are enumerated in Article 56 of the Education Law. This section of the law sets forth the purpose of charter schools to:

- (a) Improve student learning and achievement;
- (b) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are at risk of academic failure;
- (c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel;
- (e) Provide parents and students with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (f) Provide schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems by holding the schools established under this article accountable for meeting measurable student achievement results.

Criteria regarding the evaluation of charter schools, including for revision decisions, are set forth in Section 2852(2) of the Education Law:

- (a) Does the charter school described in the application meet the requirements set out in applicable laws, rules, and regulations?
- (b) Does the charter school demonstrate the ability to operate the school in an educationally and fiscally sound manner?
- (c) Will approving the charter school action make it likely to improve student learning and achievement and materially further the purposes of the law?
- (d) In a school district where the total enrollment of resident students attending charter 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) would granting the application have a significant educational benefit to the students expected to attend the proposed charter school or (ii) did the school district in which the charter school will be located consent to such application?

Performance Framework

The Board of Regents Charter School Performance Framework, which is part of the Board of Regents Charter School Renewal Policy and the Oversight Plan included in the Charter Agreement for each school, outlines three key areas of charter school performance: (1) Educational Success; (2) Organizational Soundness; and (3) Faithfulness to Charter and Law. The Charter School Performance Framework sets forth ten performance benchmarks in these three areas. The Charter School Performance Framework is designed to focus on performance outcomes, preserve operational autonomy, and facilitate transparent feedback to schools. It aligns with the Department's ongoing accountability and effectiveness work under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and holds charter schools accountable to standards set forth in the Education Law while providing the Regents with discretion. Generally, charter schools are required to demonstrate performance outcomes that exceed those of traditional public schools.

The Department considers evidence related to all ten performance benchmark areas of the Charter School Performance Framework when making recommendations to the Regents concerning charter revisions. However, student academic performance is of paramount importance when evaluating

each school (See [§ 8 NYCRR 119.7](https://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/charter-school-regulations-1197) (<https://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/charter-school-regulations-1197>). The recommendations in this document were made after a full due diligence process over the charter term as set forth in the [NYSED Charter School Monitoring Plan](http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/oversight-plan-board-regents-authorized-charter-schools) (<http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/oversight-plan-board-regents-authorized-charter-schools>), including review of the information presented by the schools in their application for each revision; specific fiscal reviews; desk audits; comprehensive analysis of achievement data; and consideration of public comment.