



KIMBERLY JEAN-PIERRE  
Assemblywoman 11<sup>th</sup> District  
Suffolk County

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August 18, 2021

Ms. Susie Miller Carello, Esq.  
Executive Director, SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
H. Carl McCall SUNY Building  
353 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12246

Dear Ms. Carello,

I write today to voice my opposition to the proposed formation of a charter school within the Wyandanch Union Free School District, and strongly urge you to *reject* the application corresponding to the 'Academy Charter School' that is currently pending before the SUNY Charter Schools Institute. Having represented the entire Wyandanch School District and community in the New York State Assembly since 2015, I have made it a top priority to work with my legislative colleagues to help deliver critical public funds to one of the most financially-distressed school districts in the entire State of New York.

Wyandanch has long been plagued by a lack of investment which has hurt our schoolchildren the most, which is why my state colleagues and I worked tirelessly to pass and enact legislation authorizing the appointment of a state fiscal monitor to oversee and work with the Wyandanch School District for a period of five years. Since the appointment of Mr. Albert Chase as state fiscal monitor, the Wyandanch community has passed two fiscally-sound, equitable budget proposals which helped the District erase a multi-million dollar budget deficit. My colleagues and I also took action to authorize Wyandanch's use of deficit financing as a means to pay down its past debt and be better positioned to issue bonds for critical expenses in the future. In addition, I am pleased to be working with my governmental colleagues at the state and local level to support Wyandanch School District's efforts to connect to the Southwest Sewer District—a vital public works project whose completion is essential to protect the public health and safety of all Wyandanch schoolchildren, teachers and staff.

In short, Wyandanch has continued to make tremendous progress in both fiscal management and educational outcomes, all while still adjusting to the 'new normal' brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to be abundantly clear—I categorically oppose any attempt to establish a charter school here in Wyandanch or in any of its surrounding communities, because

supporting our public schools is the most important investment we can make, and we have made far too much progress with the Wyandanch School District to revert back and allow an outside entity to divert critical public funds away from a district as reliant on State Aid as Wyandanch. When a handful of students leave a public school classroom to attend a charter school, that classroom still has to keep the lights on, compensate the educator and pay the heating bills; should this application be approved by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, Wyandanch's ability to meet those basic needs for its schoolchildren will be decimated, and the ancillary consequences on the greater Wyandanch community will be devastating. Publicly-funded schools should not be serving to line the pockets of private companies and individuals with no real ties to the community they will claim to serve.

We still have a long way to go, but we are making tremendous progress here in Wyandanch, and I can think of no worse time than the present to allow a profit-driven charter school with minimal community roots to inject itself and jeopardize all of the positive developments we have spearheaded together. I look forward to continuing to work with my elected colleagues and the District to ensure that our schoolchildren receive all of the educational resources they need to succeed, but that goal will become that much less attainable should you choose to approve this application. Once again, I respectfully ask you to put Wyandanch children and families first, and reject the Academy Charter School's pending application. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jean-Pierre  
Member of Assembly, 11th District

CC: Carrie Gee, Esq., Associate Counsel, SUNY Charter Schools Institute  
Dr. Gina Talbert, Superintendent, Wyandanch Union Free School District  
Christian D. Code, District Clerk, Wyandanch Union Free School District